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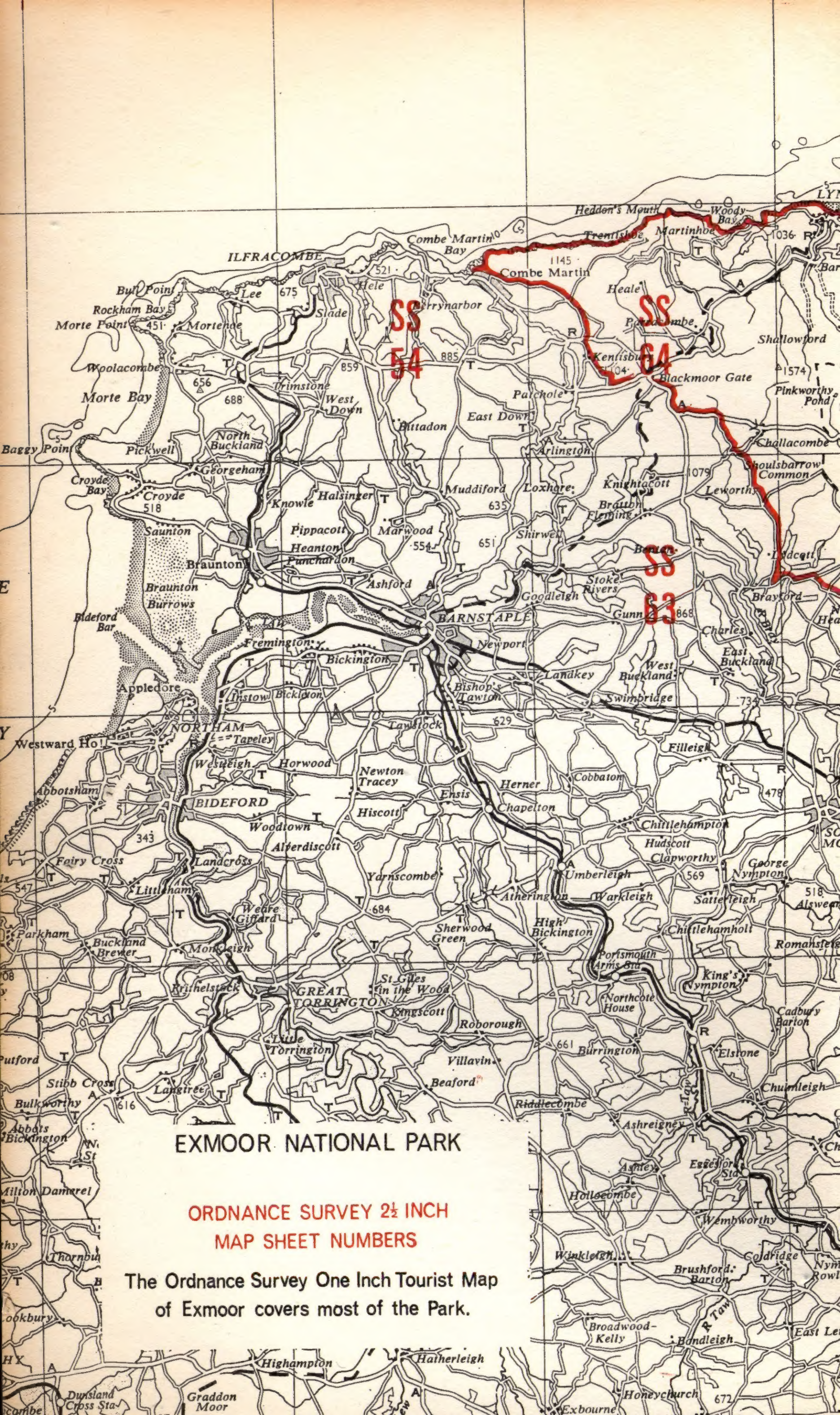

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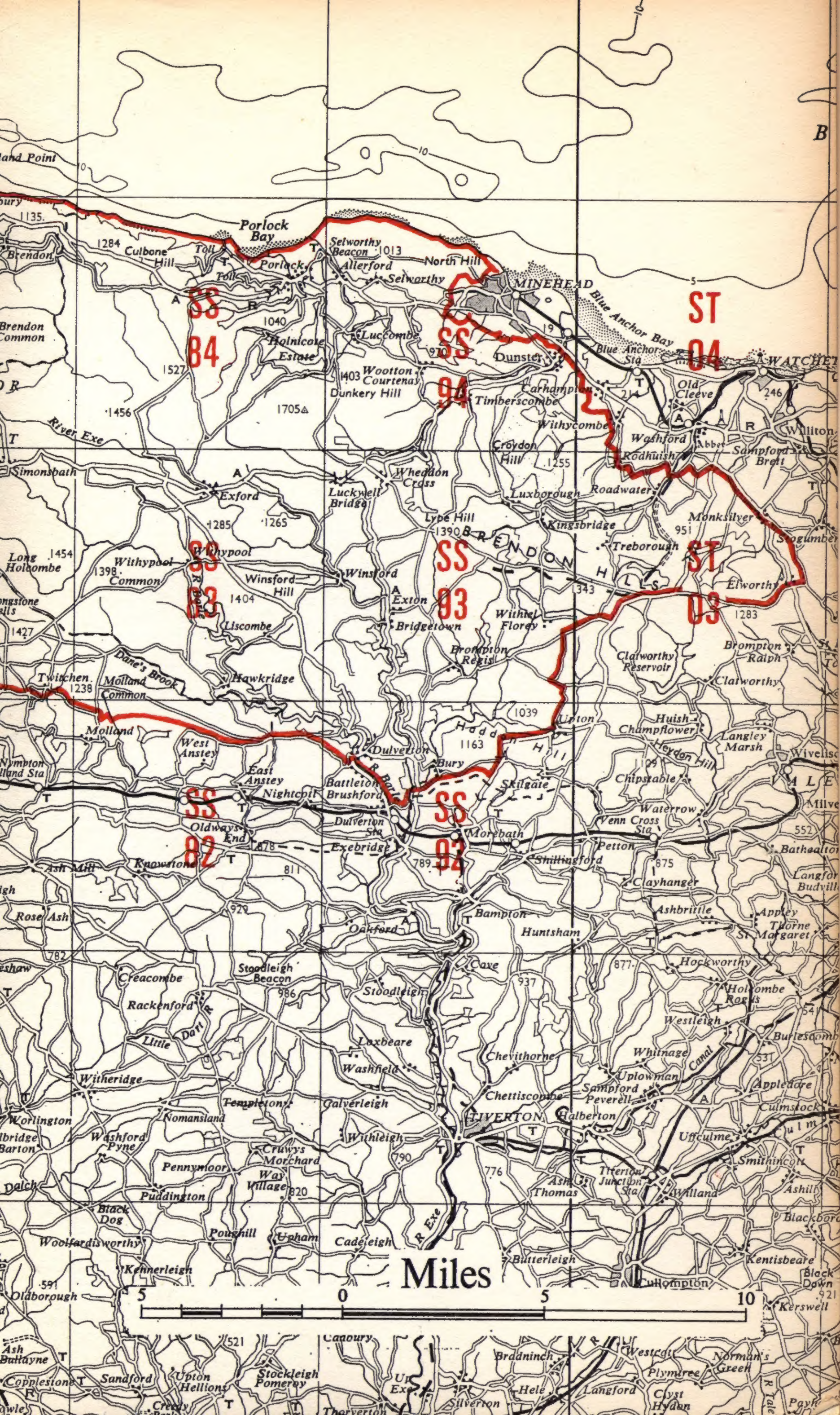
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Luccombe
Holnicote Estate
Wootton Courtenay
Dunkery Hill
Dunster
Carhampton
Timberscombe
Withycombe
Old Cleeve
Washford
Abbey
Rodhuish
Sampford Brett
Williton
River Exe
Simonsbath
Exford
Wheddon Cross
Luckwell Bridge
Croydon Hill
Luxborough
Roadwater
Kingsbridge
Treborough
Monksilver
Stogumber
Elworthy
BRENDON HILLS
Lype Hill
Withypool
Withypool Common
Long Holcombe
Winsford Hill
Winsford
Exton
Bridgetown
Withiel Florey
Liscombe
Brompton Regis
Clatworthy Reservoir
Brompton Ralph
Clatworthy
Dane's Brook
Hawkridge
Twitchen
Molland Common
Molland
West Anstey
East Anstey
Dulverton
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Dulverton Sta
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Shillingford
Petton
Waterrow
Venn Cross Sta
Clayhanger
Ashbrittle
Appley
Thorne St Margaret
Bathealton
Langford Budville
Bampton
Oakford
Huntsham
Stoodleigh Beacon
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Cove
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Burlescombe
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Witheridge
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Chettiscombe
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Uffculme
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Worlington
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Washford Pyne
Withleigh
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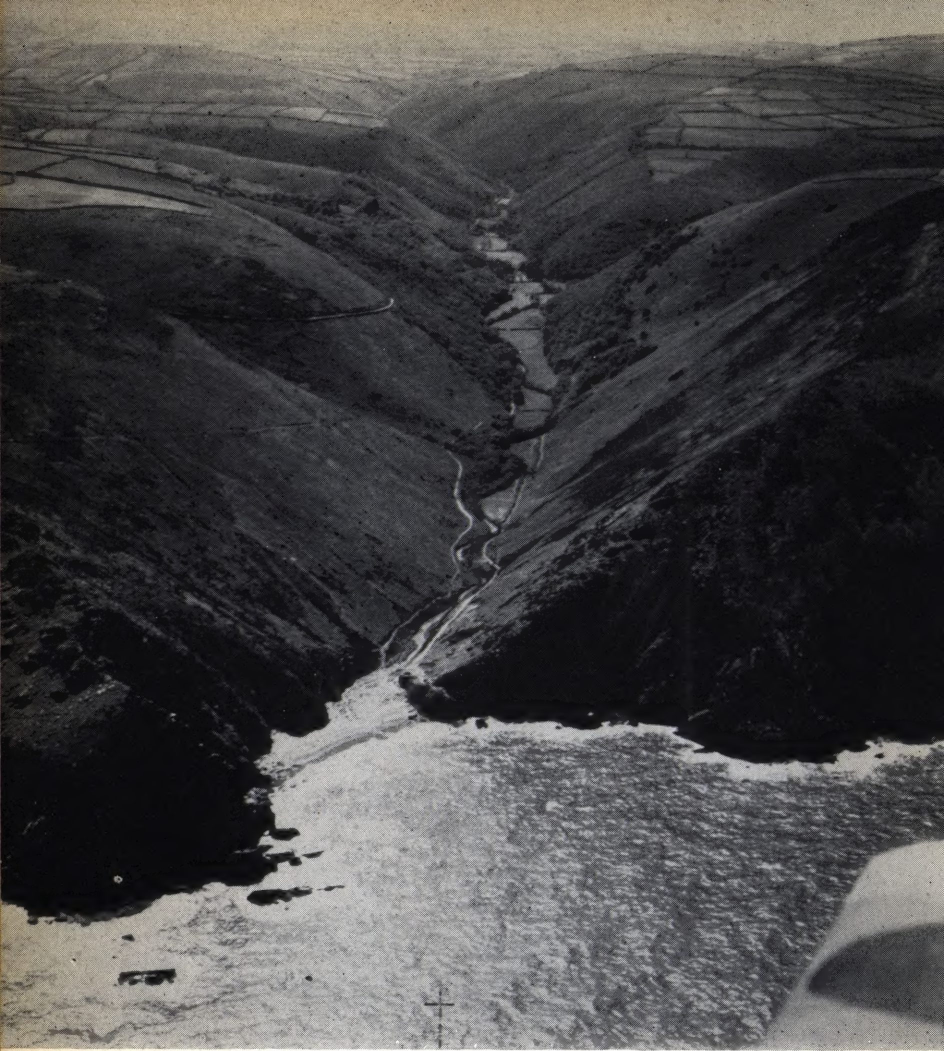

PLATE I. Heddon's Mouth

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EXMOOR

NATIONAL PARK

EXMOOR

NATIONAL PARK GUIDE No. 8

Issued for the
Countryside Commission

Edited by
John Coleman-Cooke

1x 9Pr

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
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PREFACE

Exmoor has been beautiful moorland for centuries but it has been known chiefly to those who lived in the neighbourhood or their friends. Now, thanks to modern transport, it is accessible to almost everyone. It could, therefore, not only become overcrowded but also spoilt, however unwittingly, by the people for whom the Park was intended.

This book is addressed to those who live in the Park as well as those who visit it and there is little for me to add to what has been written—prefaces are not meant for that.

I would, however, draw attention to the fact that there are areas within the Park where farmland brings variety—the richness of colour of crops and fields and patterns of walls, hedges and buildings—contrasting sharply with the bleakness of the moorland. The designation of a tract of country as a National Park does not take it out of private ownership and those who farm on Exmoor, therefore, hope their work will be assisted by those who visit the area exercising care and consideration for the countryside. Responsibility for the care of the National Park is vested in the Park Planning Authority who seek to use their powers to preserve and enhance the beauty and amenities, and industry of Exmoor.

LT.-GEN. SIR REGINALD SAVORY,
K.C.I.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

Inaugural Chairman of the Exmoor
National Park Joint Advisory Committee

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1

An Introduction to the Park and its People

by S. H. BURTON

EXMOOR, though one of the smallest of the National Parks, is unequalled in its variety of scene and mood. So contrasting are its many faces that a lifetime of exploration cannot exhaust its capacity to surprise. Bounded in the north by cliffs and the sea and in the south by the long slope of a ridge that curves north-west from the Ansteys to Parracombe, its interior consists of a high, bare plateau where swift streams flow through steep-sided valleys. In the east Dunkery rises above the dense Horner woods and overshadows its neighbouring Brendons. Westwards, the purple moor grass and the deer sedge, its colours subtly changing with the seasons, replace the flamboyant heathers and gorse. Above Selworthy springy turf makes easy walking, but two miles an hour is good going across the tussocky bogland of the Chains. In the season, Lynmouth beach is crowded, but even on an August day you will meet few people out by the Long Stone. On a dozen Exmoor farms tractors are busy on the moorland, and shepherds on shaggy ponies are rounding up their flocks. When Pinkworthy Pond is lashed by a squall it may well be too warm for comfort in Sherdon.

In the centre of the National Park lies the ancient royal forest—a royal game preserve—where for centuries the common law of England was in abeyance and the medieval Wardens upheld Forest Law, guarded the King's deer, and collected his pasturing tolls. Crown land from time immemorial until John Knight bought it from the Commissioners of Woods and Forests in 1818, this heart-shaped area of some 10,000 acres represents all that is most characteristic of the moorland. Those who would know Exmoor must know the forest. A perambulation of its boundaries, while not equalling the rigours of the Pennine Way, is no mean achievement and one that gives an unrivalled insight into the nature of wildest Exmoor. Alderman's Barrow (south-west of Lucott Cross) is a good starting point. From there to Black Barrow the route lies over wet land, affording a not-too-difficult introduction to the hard going with which untamed Exmoor challenges the explorer.

At the barrow the route turns due west, and from there to Saddle

Gate, eight miles away, rises and falls frequently and steeply as it cuts across the headwaters of the six north-flowing streams that rise in the forest and find their way to the sea at Lynmouth. Along this section of the old forest boundary the walker meets in succession Weir Water, Chalk Water, Badgworthy Water, Farley Water, Hoaroak Water, and the twin combes that unite at the foot of Thorn Hill to form the upper reaches of the West Lyn. For many who know Exmoor well this eight-mile stretch (eight miles as the crow flies, but a good deal more when the 'upping and downing' is reckoned in) comprehends the finest of all that the moor can offer. The six singing streams in their steep-sided valleys, the wild moorland under its vast, changing skies, provide at once a challenge and a tranquillity unsurpassed by any other Exmoor scene. And, though unified in mood, the successive combes and the intervening hills afford both scenic and historic variety. The route passes close to Three Combes' Foot, in a circle of beech trees, where the finest stell (cattle pound) on Exmoor may be seen. Tom's Hill and Larkbarrow farms, built for shepherds of the Knights but destroyed in the Second World War, lie derelict just inside the forest. The Forest Wall—John Knight's great labour—marks the boundary up Hoccombe Water. Brendon Two Gates breaches the wall and opens the way to the Hoar Oak Tree, where an oak has stood time out of mind to mark the forest limits. This one is the third of which we have certain knowledge. Beyond the tree is the Hoaroak Covert where I have seen deer on three successive days; and beyond the covert, into and out of three steep valleys, the boundary line leads the traveller to a beech hedge and Saddle Gate and the incomparable view towards the Shallowford that Henry Williamson immortalised.

At Saddle Gate the route turns south, and the going is easier as a good track climbs steadily to Wood Barrow. To the west the crooked Long Stone and Chapman Barrows; to the east Chains Barrow, that useful landmark capped by a squat 'trig point', firm in the morass. A few forest boundary stones mark the way over grassy Broad Mead until the Edgerley Stone—set in the bank of the Challacombe–Simonsbath road, and dividing Somerset from Devon—is reached.

South to Mole's Chamber, a dreary spot, the boundary coincides with the route of one of Britain's most ancient trackways, linking Cornwall with the Midlands. Whether it is Farmer Mole's ghost or the phantom of some ancient packman I do not know, but an unquiet spirit seems to brood here; and the ruins of the Acland Arms, where Frederic Knight's miners used to drink, do nothing to cheer the scene.

The comparatively low-lying basin is soon left behind as the forest boundary lifts itself to the tumuli at Setta Barrow and Five Barrows, two of the most dramatic of the moor's viewpoints. Both heights stand on the fringe of the southern ridge and command extensive views both south and north. South, over the wooded country and gentler pastures, Dartmoor and Sidmouth Gap are plain to see. North, the distant moor lines roll in seemingly endless repetitions; but nearer, Kinsford Water starts its long journey to the Barle, cutting a deep cleft in the southern forest. And from Five Barrows to Sandyway Cross the boundary clings to the ridge. The going is easy, and here the student of the Park, armed with binoculars, compass and one-inch ordnance map, should spend several hours identifying the landmarks that are spread before him and that he must learn if he is to know the moor's anatomy.

Beyond Sandyway the boundary cuts through the Danes Brook at Willingford Crossing, and there swings due north to cross the Barle at Sherdon Hutch (where Sherdon Water joins it) and to lead the explorer through one of the finest of Exmoor's valleys. Cow Castle, the White Water and Pickedstones Farm are near at hand, and the bare slopes up which the route climbs to hit the Simonsbath road near Red Deer have a spare beauty characteristic of the moorland's quieter scenes. For a mile from Red Deer, boundary and road are one, but the northward plunge into Rams Combe and the subsequent long haul back to Alderman's Barrow are ample compensation for a mile of road walking.

Such, in sketchy and inadequate outline, is the journey that the traveller must make in walking the bounds of the old royal forest. Yet, despite the inevitable distortions and omissions of such a hurried description, this introduction to the Park and its people had to begin in that way. Twenty years of Exmoor wanderings have taught me that the forest is the key to the moor. I was myself lucky enough to be introduced to Exmoor in this way. My guide taught me the forest first, getting its boundaries firmly into my head. This experience has convinced me that a true appreciation of the Park's character must be so formed. Once the forest is known, the outer regions of the moor fit into the picture. The early impressions of bewildering complexity give place to a delight in its variety, while the true character of the moor—the unity that dominates the diversity—emerges.

The forest itself divides into the north forest and the south forest, the line between the two being the Exford–Challacombe road, which passes through Simonsbath, the moorland capital. The north forest is split into a western and an eastern sector by the road B 3223, which runs due north from Simonsbath on its way to Lynton and Lynmouth. The south forest is more unified in mood and character.

The western area of the north forest is the home of that high, forbidding plateau called the Chains—and never was name better deserved. Its northern edge is broken by three rivers which drop from 1,500 feet to sea-level in four miles: a precipitous descent providing dramatic effects in times of heavy rain. Over its southern edge tumble half a dozen streams that join the upper reaches of the Barle. Between these two valley systems lies the boggy tableland which only the deer and stout-hearted walkers can cross. The lonely heights are lashed by frequent gales—even on a summer's day the wind stirs here. The rainfall is heavier than anywhere else on the moor; the land is sour, peaty, awash. There are no trees, only the coarse matted grass. Yet the desolation and the silence culminate in a sublimity that makes the Chains, for a very few, one of Exmoor's finest scenes. A good walker who does not mind a wetting and is not afraid of being alone will not call himself a true man of the moor until he has made the laborious pilgrimage from Wood Barrow to Pinkworthy Pond, from Pinkworthy to Chains Barrow, and on to Exe Head.

For the first mile of its course the infant Exe is lost—dominated by the wild wet moorland in which it is born, welling sluggishly out of black peat and forming a muddy basin before it hesitatingly decides to flow away to the east. But once it has passed under the Simonsbath–Lynton road and entered the eastern sector of the north forest the river dominates the scene. Exe Cleave is the most notable topographical feature in this part of the forest; a valley with a towering rampart for its southern wall and the dreary Pinford bogs on its northern slopes. Warren Farm stands high above the north bank, and beyond the farm Trout Hill points towards the confluence of Long Combe and Hoccombe Water which, at its foot, turn north together to form Badgworthy Water.

If the Exe dominates the north-east forest, the southern forest belongs to the Barle. When John Knight made Pinkworthy Pond he did so by damming up the headwaters of this lovely river. From Pinkworthy to Sherdon Hutch the Barle flows through the finest stretch of its long journey to Dulverton. The woodlands that border its lower course are absent here; only at Simonsbath is it tree-lined. Above and below the little village it receives the waters of a score of tributary streams, their lateral combes sharply angled to the main valley. Steep-sided hills with rounded tops, sheltered trout streams—haunt of dippers and occasionally kingfishers—make a picturesque scene that contrasts strikingly with the north forest.

PLATE II. Porlock Vale and beach, with Bossington Hill and Hurlstone Point in the background. The Vale is the richest farmland in the Park. Access to the beach at the east end is by Bossington village and at the west from Porlock Weir. The B3225 crosses centre of picture, linking Porlock and Porlock Weir

PLATE III. Lee Bay. Scots pine, larch, gorse, and primroses on a cliffside on the toll road west of the Valley of the Rocks, Lynton. Massed dwarf sessile oaks clothe the slopes of Duty Point on the other side of the Cove.

PLATE IV. Hawkcombe Woods. Traditional woodland of broad-leaved species, mostly sessile oak, ash, beech, birch, and occasionally sycamore, hazel, alder and rowan. The higher parts are open to the moor and much grazed by red deer

PLATE V. The River Barle, near its source at Pinkworthy Pond. High moors in the distance rise to about 1,500 feet to the south of the Challacombe—Simonsbath road

In its eight or nine miles the upper Barle tells us much of Exmoor's history. At Cow Castle a prehistoric fortress still guards the junction of White Water and Barle. In Simonsbath, James Boevey's[1] house is a reminder of the Wardens and the days of Forest Law. All around lie the farms that John and Frederic Knight made; and in the valley, from Cornham Ford to the Wheal Eliza, the Barle rushes past the abandoned iron mines. Up the hill, three Knights lie buried hard by the little church that Frederic built when the civil and ecclesiastical parish was created.

The south bank of the Barle climbs up to 1,400 feet. Below the crest stand Horsen, Wintershead and Emmett's Grange. Beneath the farms, Kinsford Water and the Sherdon valley system repeat the scenic pattern of the upper Barle, their combes and hills tucked under the forest's southern heights. The road from Simonsbath to Kinsford Gate runs through the south forest, and from its steep gradients, looking both left and right, the traveller may study the main features of this hilly, combe-cut land, learning to distinguish the streams that, to a superficial eye, look so alike, but present to the accustomed gaze marked differences of character.

Outside the forest, the National Park may be divided into four distinct areas, each with its own characteristics: the coastal belt; Dunkery; Winsford Hill; and the Brendons.

The sea is never far away from the Exmoor traveller. In the heart of the forest he may forget its presence for a time, but all over the moor, from a hundred different heights, he is made suddenly aware that it forms the northern boundary of the Park. It is a coast of sharp contrasts. The eastern end, where Selworthy Beacon dominates the scene, is a rounded grassy height, criss-crossed by tracks. From the Memorial Hut above the woodland paths there is a choice of delectable routes: to the Beacon to gaze at the coast of Wales; to Minehead sheltering under the hill; to the Lookout hanging over the sea; to the Grabbist range, over heather and gorse, and down into Dunster with its church and castle.

Below Selworthy lies the Vale of Porlock: a fertile tract, warmed by airs funnelled in from the sea that help to ripen the early wheat. Summer visitors throng the main street of the village where the shingled and truncated spire of the parish church crowns a lovely building. Houses are turned 'backsevore', Porlock fashion; memories of Coleridge abound. The once-dreaded hill (or the newer toll road) leads to what must be one of the finest coast roads in England: the moor to the left, the wood-crowned cliffs to the right, and the sea at your feet.

---

[1] Pronounced Boovy.

Insert

As Foreland Point is neared, the cliffs are bare again and the road plunges down Countisbury and into Lynmouth—Rhenish Tower, Cliff Railway, holiday crowds. The scars of the great flood have healed. Above hang Lynton and the fantastic sculptures of the Valley of the Rocks. Up the East Lyn, through Myrtleberry Cleave, the moorland rivers join in the dense woodlands at Waters Meet.

On beyond Woody Bay, now acquired by the National Trust, the cliffs are split open by the spectacular ravine through which the Heddon reaches the sea. In such surroundings small wonder that the old lime kilns have been mistaken for the crumbling relics of a medieval keep. Trentishoe Down has a moorland top, and from here to the Park's western boundary at Combe Martin Bay the tough rocks have resisted centuries of weathering to produce the fine inland heights and jutting promontories that, in combination, make this perhaps the most impressive section of Exmoor's wonderful coast. Holdstone Down and Girt Down are superb backcloths for the sea and its breakers at their feet. But for me, the incomparable sight along this stretch is the wild valley where Sherrycombe Water makes its great leap to the sea. The descent into the combe is laborious—though child's play compared with the climb out of it on the Great Hangman side—but the reward is great.

Dunkery Beacon is the highest of Exmoor's hills and, fittingly, is surrounded by the most picturesque inland scenery to be found in the Park. The name Dunkery possibly means rocky height, or rocky hill-fort, and the Beacon was in use as a fire-signal station from the fourteenth to the mid-seventeenth century. Around the modern cairn (commemorating the gift of Dunkery to the National Trust) are the remains of several tumuli, and the lonely track above Codsend Moors leads to the Rowbarrows. This is the moorland part of the Dunkery region, savage and sullen. But below its northern face the scene is transformed. Stoke Pero's tiny church is set in a hollow so deep that the top of the tower is level with the rim of the bowl. At nearby Cloutsham, the East Water and the Horner curve through their separate woodlands until they meet at the foot of Horner Hill and flow together to the sea. Bird song and river music, the dense green woods, the grassy mound of Cloutsham Ball—and looming high above, the heather slopes of Dunkery, Easter Hill and Robin How. The contrast between the sylvan valleys and the moorland heights is nowhere more apparent than at Webber's Post, favourite summer stopping place for picknicking motorists. Criss-crossed by tracks (signposted with the charming names that children gave them long ago) Webber's Post is the gateway to eastern Exmoor's loveliest walks, many of them gentle enough for old people and the very young. Through pine woods to the south and east longer tracks lead to Luccombe and to Porlock Vale, and on to the Grabbist Hills and the Avill valley. The Dunkery area contains some of the prettiest parts of the Park.

But, in an autumn dusk when the stags are belling, or on a winter's day when there is snow on top, Dunkery's gentler aspects disappear. 'Outover'—up by Rowbarrows, or on the Beacon itself—the gales can lift a man off his feet. And when the clouds obliterate the cairn and cut the hill in half, the rain that falls on Dunkery is as fierce and cold as any that falls on the Chains.

South of Dunkery, and dividing it from Winsford Hill, the Exe flows through its lower moorland courses. Between Exford and Winsford it sweeps round Great Staddon Hill before holding a steady course south on its way to Dulverton. South of Winsford Hill, the Barle—a bigger river than its captor—is thickly wooded in these lower reaches. Bare banks at Withypool—coppices at South Hill—ever-denser woodlands from Great Bradley onwards.

Trees on Exmoor have for too long been a subject for angry debate. Much of the heat has perhaps been generated by the common misunderstanding of the name Exmoor Forest. Forest in this sense simply means a royal game preserve; and there is no evidence whatever to show that the high moor has ever carried trees in historic times. But the lower combes have always been wooded and in a score of places—Horner, Culbone, the lower Barle are obvious examples—the woodlands are an essential element in the beauty, just as the bareness of the moor lines is essential to the character of the western plateau and the hills. The principle that emerges is surely plain to see and vital to hold: extend, re-plant and tend the woodlands in the lower combes, but leave the bare uplands alone.

The heather-covered splendour of Winsford Hill is very much a case in point. It interposes its impressive bulk between the moorland's two chief rivers: bare Exe and woody Barle. Its lower slopes are wooded, its top is clean. Scrub thorn, rowan and wind-twisted oak get a bare existence in the shelter of the Punchbowl. Within the space of a very few miles the characteristic variety of the Park is strikingly revealed. It is this variety above all things that lovers of Exmoor wish to preserve.

East of the main road that leads from Dulverton to Dunster yet another region of the Park is found. Some of Exmoor's features are repeated on the Brendons, but the scale is smaller, the scenery is less bold. On the summits of the hills the moorland is open, but there is less of it—more farms, more pasture. The valleys carry thicker woods and much open moor has been reclaimed for forestry. The scene is gentler, dominantly pastoral. It is rarely possible on the Brendons to be quite out of sight of men—or of their habitations—or to escape some reminder of the works of their hands.

It is not always understood that the Exmoor National Park is a place where people live and work; and it is easy to forget in the wilder western regions that the whole of the Park is used for agriculture. From earliest days beasts were summer-pastured on the open moor, and the Knights' great work of reclamation intensified the farming and established a pattern that holds to this day. The hill farmers of the Park must work hard for their living, and though the tractor and electricity have done much to help them, they struggle with the elements and the poor soil as their ancestors did. The hard life and the isolation have been tempered but not removed by the developments of the post-war period.

Twenty years of moorland walking have given me an immense respect for these hardy folk, and their varied skills: 'Jack of all trades and master of them all' would be a fair description of the qualities that make a successful moorland farmer. Yet the hard work is mitigated by the sense of independence that the life breeds and by pride in the exercise of traditional crafts and modern skills. This is perhaps especially true of the flock-masters. Round-up, shearing, lambing, buying, selling, vetting—these are activities that make both mental and physical demands.

Nor is the life without its pleasures. Many an Exmoor farmer at work in his field keeps a horse ready saddled-up in case the Devon and Somerset come that way. And many a conversation has taught me that the man who lives and works in the wild places may well have a keener awareness of the beauty of his habitual surroundings than the stranger who comes consciously to seek it.

Though visitors are now much commoner than they were, Exmoor people are still ready to welcome them—and not solely those who come to stay at the farmhouse and so contribute to the farmer's income. Shut his gates, keep your dog on a lead when there are sheep about, take away your litter, remember it is his land you are on, and the Exmoor farmer will prove a friendly soul. If you are serious in your enquiries about the moor he will help you a lot. Nobody, after all, is better able to do so—it's his home.

2

The Scenery of the Moors and Coast

by J. A. STEERS

THE geological map of those parts of North Devon and Somerset which contain the National Park of Exmoor shows that the area is composed almost entirely of sedimentary rocks, and that for the most part the beds strike nearly west and east. The regional dip is to the south. Newer beds come in near Minehead and to the east of the Park. The whole assemblage of the Devonian and Carboniferous beds[1] is part of the great synclinal or downfold that traverses the south-western peninsula (Fig. 1). The folding is part of the Armorican[2] movements, and in detail is much more complicated than can be shown on a small-scale map.

The following table is intended to emphasize two main points—the age and general nature of the several beds:

	O	Blown sand of the modern shore.
	N	The clay beds near Fremington.
	M	The Lias—mainly clays and limestones.
	L	The Trias—sandstones and conglomerates.
	K	The Permian—sandstones and marls.
Carboniferous	J	Upper Culm Measures—mainly shales and sandstones.
	I	Lower Culm Measures—dark shales, local slates, lavas, limestones, and grits. (Only a narrow zone.)
Upper Devonian	H	Pilton Beds—slates, with thin bands of limestones and sandstone.
	G	Baggy Beds—sandstones, shales, flagstones.
	F	Pickwell Down Beds—vari-coloured sandstones and some shales.

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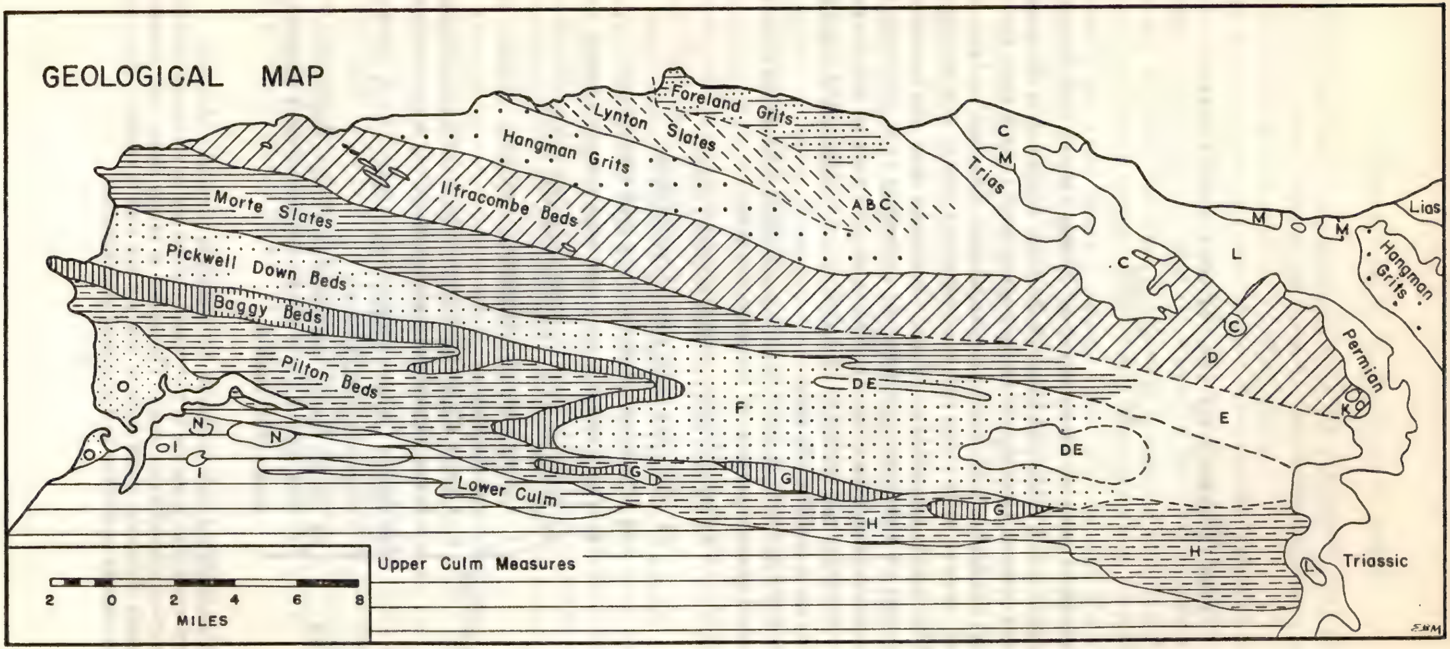
[1] The Carboniferous beds in Devon are known as the Culm Measures.

[2] A term applied to those earth movements which led to mountain formation in Permo-Carboniferous times. The name is taken from the Armorican peninsula (Brittany) where folds of this age are well developed. The word is approximately equivalent to Hercynian and Variscan.


GEOLOGICAL MAP
Foreland Grits
Lynton Slates
Hangman Grits
Ilfracombe Beds
Morte Slates
Pickwell Down Beds
Baggy Beds
Pilton Beds
Lower Culm
Upper Culm Measures
Trias
Triassic
Permian
Lias
Hangman Grits
ABC
C
M
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E.H.M.

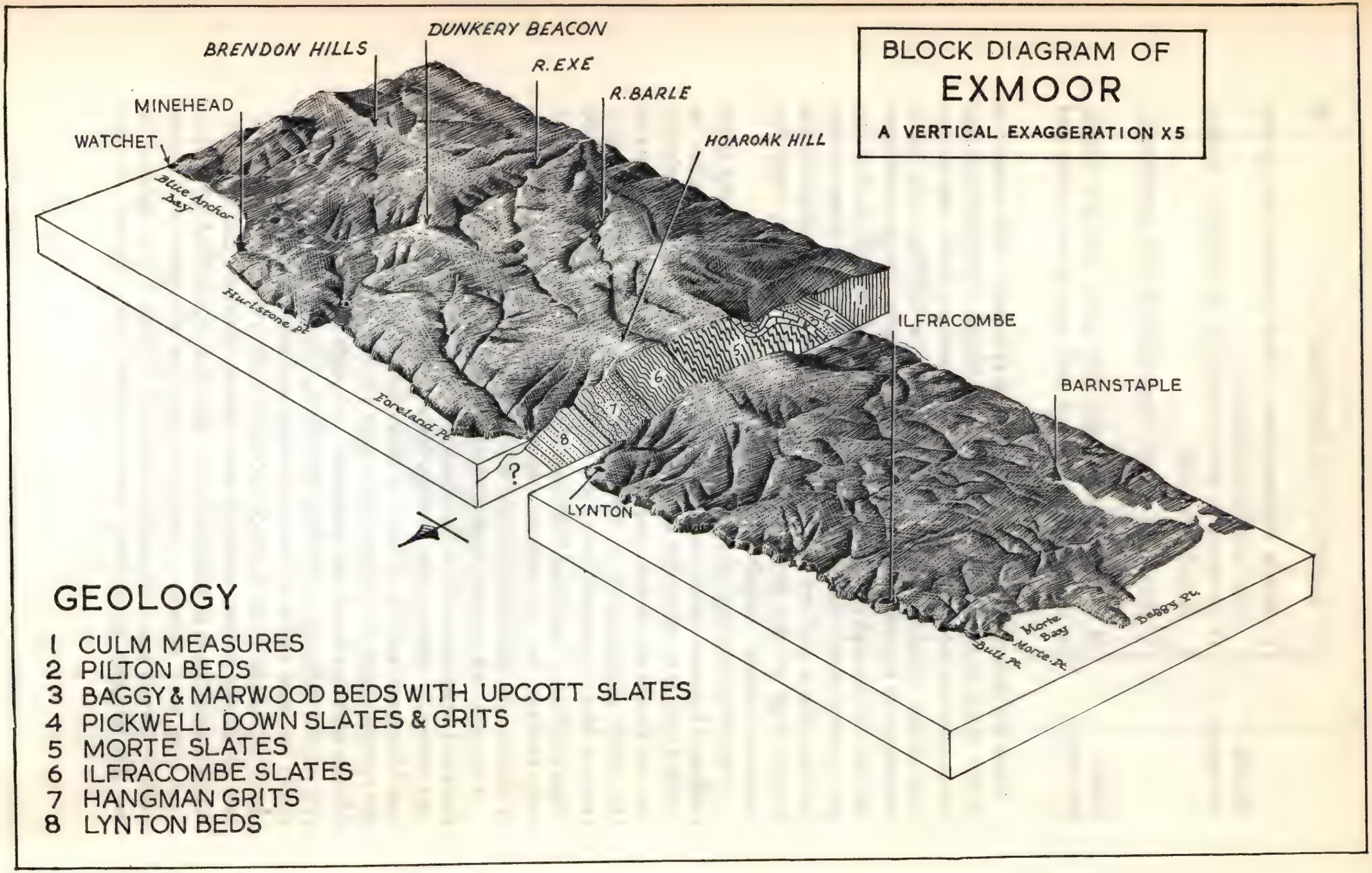
Fig. 1

Middle Devonian	E Morte Slates—slates, often smooth and glossy (age a little uncertain). D Ilfracombe Beds—silicified limestones, shales, limestones, grits.
Lower Devonian	C Hangman Grits—fine-grained red sandstones, some shaly beds. B Lynton Slates—blue-grey slates and grit bands. A Foreland Grits—red and grey quartz grits and slates.

Since the general structure of the area is synclinal, what appear to be the oldest beds, the Foreland Grits, are found on the north coast, and a traverse from Foreland Point to Barnstaple leads one across successively younger strata. At one time the folding must have formed much higher ground, a true mountain area. The gradual wear and tear of this high ground gave rise to the newer deposits now found particularly on the east margin of Exmoor. The first of these are the breccias, marls, and red sandstones of Permian age, like those on the eastern edge of the Brendon Hills. The later, Triassic, beds are somewhat similar, mainly conglomerates and sandstones.

In the Minehead region the softer sediments rest in low-lying areas enclosed between more resistant blocks. The beautiful valley in which Dunster is situated is a good example. Examination has shown that the blocks are faulted and tilted. There is no doubt that many of the newer sediments have disappeared as a result of subsequent erosion. Near Selworthy there is a small outcrop of the Lias, clearly implying that at one time this formation spread over a much wider area. Perhaps, too, the rather steep south-eastern border of Exmoor is faulted, but unfortunately the evidence is obscured.

Although the general arrangement of the strata is synclinal, it must not be supposed that the detailed structure is simple. The coast cuts obliquely athwart the various beds so that between Bull Point and Minehead (see Fig. 2) various rocks form the cliffs. Nevertheless the *general* nature of the coast (see pages 14–18) does not alter greatly. All the beds are hard and resistant, although the Ilfracombe Beds give a more indented coast than the others. There is also some doubt about the true order of the beds—the sequence given in the table above is the apparent, but not necessarily the true, sequence. However, from the present point of view this is relatively unimportant. What is significant is that neither on the coast nor inland do individual beds play notably conspicuous parts in the scenery. Farther west, in Devon and Cornwall, small-scale folding is very evident in the cliff sections particularly near Hartland and Millook. In the



BLOCK DIAGRAM OF
EXMOOR
A VERTICAL EXAGGERATION X5

GEOLOGY

1 CULM MEASURES
2 PILTON BEDS
3 BAGGY & MARWOOD BEDS WITH UPCOTT SLATES
4 PICKWELL DOWN SLATES & GRITS
5 MORTE SLATES
6 ILFRACOMBE SLATES
7 HANGMAN GRITS
8 LYNTON BEDS

Exmoor area perhaps the best examples of it are near Rillage Point, and at West Hagginton beach, and generally in the Ilfracombe district. These and many other exposures show that we have to deal with a complex mass, and even today the unravelling of the structure of the Cornubian peninsula is far from complete. Moreover, the beds outcropping on the coast of Devon and Cornwall imply that at some remote time they continued much farther to the west. When the present outline of the whole peninsula was evolved is uncertain. The development of the coast near Lynton is considered in more detail on pages 15–16, but this appears to be a separate problem. Exmoor today is a high moorland, although parts of it are used for agricultural purposes. It is often a surprise to find enclosed land at such heights. If it is traversed in any direction the generally rounded and plateau-like nature of its surface is at once apparent. Cut in the moor are some beautiful deep wooded gorges—those of the East and West Lyn are known to thousands. They are but two of many, and collectively all give great character to the region.

Since the strata are inclined in such a way as to present their dip slopes to the south and scarp faces to the north, the general levelness of the surface cannot be in any way related to the structure. Viewed from certain directions, for example near South Molton, it is sometimes possible to trace more than one general level in the topography. Careful study both of Ordnance maps and of the country itself suggests that there are several such surfaces, which have been studied by Professor Balchin. The tourist must not expect to see or identify any particular surface with ease or conviction, and it must be admitted that there are differences of opinion about their origin, number and extent. In the district around Challacombe there are ten summits all between 1,550 and 1,618 feet; in the Brendon Hills summits range between 1,344 and 1,391 feet. Dunkery Beacon, the highest point of Exmoor, is 1,706 feet, and stands apart. Those who have considered this question of what is usually called 'accordance of summit level', regard a close agreement of summit heights as indicating that there was at one time a continuous surface at about that level and that it is now represented only by the summits. Hence, excluding Dunkery, the highest level is pictured as ranging between 1,550 and 1,618 feet. Below this are remains of another surface which extends over most of Exmoor. Its levels vary from 1,600 to 1,250 feet; below that level the slopes suddenly steepen. This surface consists of a series of broad, rounded summits and shows no general systematic slope to any lower level, but local slopes extend from it in all directions to the deeply cut valleys. There is no correlation between this surface and geological structure.

Near the coast, at about 1,225 feet, there are traces of a surface, often fairly clear, on the spurs between streams. The same level has been found all round the moor. Like those below it, it is marked by a steeper rise at its inner limits, and by an increased gradient at its lower level. Thus it forms a shelf, perhaps two to three miles wide. Since it is prominent near Lynton, the name of that place has been given to it. There is no need to describe others at any length. It must suffice to say that levels have been claimed at 850–925 feet (Molland Surface); 700–750 feet (Anstey Surface); 500–675 feet (Buckland Surface); 308–425 feet (Georgeham Surface); 200–280 feet (Instow Surface). All these are fragmentary, but if, as is believed, they are recognizable in patches all round the moor, they must have considerable significance. The general view today is that they represent former sea-levels; they are raised beaches on a big scale. This in turn implies a sea-level falling more or less continuously from Cretaceous times, because the summit surface is regarded by some as a plane cut by the sea early in the Cretaceous period. Another view is that the surfaces may have been formed by atmospheric agents working above sea-level, but this makes it difficult to account for their regularity, and also for the steeper rise and fall at their inner and outer limits. But neither explanation is entirely convincing and despite the fact that physiographers claim to find similar levels in many other places, no one has yet given a fully satisfying account of their origin.

The topography of the river valleys also indicates some changes of level of the sea relative to the land. If a river has been cutting downwards regularly the whole time it has occupied its valley, the sides will slope fairly uniformly, unless strata of more resistant rock produce ledges. The longitudinal profiles of rivers may be similarly affected. If, however, a river has been cutting its valley for a long time with reference to a particular sea-level, and then there is a downward change of level, clearly there will be a break in both the transverse and longitudinal[1] profiles, and a break having no necessary connection with hard or soft layers of rock. The rivers in Exmoor show marked breaks of this type, but since only two phases are usually distinguished no complete link can be made with the surfaces. The Heddon is a very good example of a 'two-cycle' stream.

If the Barle and the Exe are traced from their sources, it will be noticed that their general direction of flow is south-eastwards until near their junction, then the combined stream, the Exe, south of

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[1] The transverse break will manifest itself as a V-shaped inner valley cut in the older, higher and wider valley; the longitudinal break may appear as a waterfall or rapid, but more probably as a steepening of the gradient.

Dulverton flows in a gorge-like valley and curves eastward, but where it is joined by the Batherm it takes a southerly direction. This anomalous course seems to imply that the river did not originate on the present surface, but was superimposed on it, possibly from a cover of rocks of Mesozoic age, which has now completely disappeared. This view is consistent with the fact that few of the streams are in any sense adjusted to structure. On the Foreland, Lynton, Hangman, Pickwell Down, and Pilton Beds the streams run across the strike of the beds. On the other hand the upper Exe and upper Barle follow the strike of the Ilfracombe Beds. Professor Balchin concluded that 'there has been little subsequent development or adjustment to structure on the more resistant Devonian, except in the higher regions which have been exposed longest and are traversed by larger rivers such as the Barle and Exe.' This, however, may be a somewhat strong view, since a number of streams do follow the strike of the beds, especially in the eastern part of the Park area.

Why does Exmoor stand out as a high plateau? It may be contended with some reason that it does so because it is formed of resistant rocks. But are they so much more resistant than those of central Devon? O. T. Jones advanced another view. He contended that the arrangement of the rivers in central Devon, which converge before they finally flow out in the main streams of the Exe, Torridge, and Taw, implies that the whole surface was warped into a basin-like form as the result of the folding movements of Tertiary time. If this is so, Exmoor may owe its height to an up-doming and not merely to rock hardness.

The short streams on the north side of the moor have cut deep and narrow valleys and break through to the coast in picturesque gorges. Since the rainfall is considerable (about 60″ on the moor) these rivers often flow with high velocities, and it is not difficult to see how they have cut the valleys in which they run. It is also noteworthy that despite both altitude and rainfall the total number of streams is rather smaller than might be expected. This provokes the question, not at present answerable—is run-off controlled more by vegetation than by structure?

No account of Exmoor would be complete without some reference to the severe flooding of Lynmouth in 1952. It occurred on August 15, following a wet period so that the ground was saturated. There was rain nearly all day, but most fell between 8 p.m. and 1 a.m. on the 16th. In twenty-four hours 9·11 ins. were recorded at Longstone Barrow, and 7·58 ins. at Challacombe. The heaviest rain fell in an area enclosed by Dunster, Tiverton, South Molton and Lynmouth. Kidson calculated that some 3,000 million tons fell in the 38 square miles drained by the East and West Lyn rivers. For a short time the discharge of the two streams at Lynmouth was more than 23,000 cubic feet per second, a rate of flow almost as great as the record figure for the Thames! About 40,000 tons of boulders were moved into Lynmouth, and the greatest damage occurred as a result of surges sweeping down after the flow had overcome a temporary blocking of the valley by fallen trees. 'The West Lyn in a single day moved more than 50,000 tons of boulders, some of which weighed more than ten tons, and it is estimated that the deltaic deposit on the right bank of the East Lyn river in Lynmouth contains some 200,000 cubic yards of boulders, debris and soils, most of it brought down at some time by the West Lyn river.' High up on the moorland, slides were formed, many as a result of completely saturated soil and vegetation being stripped off a surface of rock which was 'lubricated' by the storm. Another type of slide, limited to one notable example, resulted from the downhill flow of saturated debris.

Storms of this severity may be rare, but it is essential to realize what changes they can bring about in a short time. Lesser storms have similar, even if not so catastrophic effects. To watch the Lyn rivers on a summer's day affords little idea of the work they can do at other times, and if we are to form a true picture of the sculpturing of Exmoor or of any other high-lying area, we must allow for the effects of storms. We must also remember that, although Exmoor was not ice-covered as were many areas farther north, yet during and after the Ice Age the climate was severe and the protective effects of vegetation negligible, so that far-reaching changes took place as a result of frost action and of turbulent streams, especially in summer after the melting of the winter snows.

The coast of Exmoor is remarkable. In one sense it may even be regarded as dull and disappointing, because it is in such a sheltered position that only occasionally can direct and vigorous wave action work upon it. Hence, the amount of present-day marine erosion is limited. In this sense it cannot compare with the magnificent cliffs between Boscastle and Hartland, subject as they are to the full onslaught of the Atlantic. If, however, we think of the coast in the whole context of Exmoor, then we must agree that it is one of the finest in Britain.

In parts of North Cornwall and North Devon, two distinct types of cliff are found, those, for example, at Hartland where the cliff is vertical, or nearly so, and is flat-topped, and those of much of Exmoor where, characteristically, a long convex slope from the top of the coastal ridge extends down almost to sea-level. Only the bottom part of the slope is sea-eroded, and the marine cliff (using that term for a feature produced by wave action) is relatively insignificant. Yet the setting of the whole is magnificent, and few coastal stretches are followed by a more attractive road than that between Lynton, Martinhoe, and Trentishoe.

In 1911 E. A. N. Arber published *The Coast Scenery of North Devon*, a classic all too little known at the present time. He analysed the cliff scenery in a way that is still unique in this country, and anyone who seeks more detail than can be given here should consult his book. All that can be attempted is a brief survey from east to west and a general discussion of some recent work. Around Minehead (see page 10) the main features have been produced by faulting; all blocks are tilted to the north or north-east. The ancient valleys thus formed give the present-day lowlands of Porlock, Cleeve and Stogumber, in which recent deposits have accumulated. Fine marine and fluvial sands also cover the coastal flats. The low-lying areas east of Minehead and that in Porlock Bay are easily flooded. The high ground between Minehead and Porlock is formed mainly of Devonian slates, but Hurlstone Point and Greenaleigh are in the Foreland sandstone. The convexity of the high ground is most striking in this isolated mass.

Hog's-back cliffs are prominent between Porlock and Lynton. Here and on other parts of this coast, almost the only way of seeing them properly is from a boat. Between Porlock, which was washed by the sea in pre-Norman times, and Countisbury, the coastal rocks are in the Foreland Grits, hard fine-grained sandstones and grits. At Culbone Hill the coastal slopes reach 1,300 feet, and more than 1,000 feet at County Gate. The slope from the coast to the sea, in a direct line, is anything from three-quarters of a mile to a mile, and is characteristic of hog's-back cliffs. In this stretch there are a number of small streams, all of which have cut deep valleys, and some of which end in waterfalls. Because of the nature of the cliffs the falls are not usually spectacular. Coscombe Water is typical, and resembles the fall in Woody Bay. There are others at Desolation Point and Wingate Water. The Foreland is part of an old range of hills trending north and south, and emphasizes the fact that a headland is not prominent merely because it is formed of more resistant rock. The view from the Foreland allows the visitor to get a fair appreciation of the coast.

The joint mouth of the East and West Lyn makes an important break, and the great spread of boulders on the foreshore is noteworthy, and forms an interesting comment on floods such as that in 1952, although doubtless many of the boulders are directly derived from the cliffs. A mile or so farther west is the Valley of the Rocks. It is now dry and its seaward face is weathered into bizarre forms cut in impure and soft sandstones. The rectangular blocks follow the bedding and main joint systems. A walk along the cliff path outside it demonstrates the form and nature of the hog's-back type of cliff. Scott Simpson suggests that the valley is a continuation of that of the East Lyn, and he also correlates it with the valley in which Lee Abbey lies, and with the 'flat' at Crock Point. Arber and Scott Simpson both regarded the Valley of the Rocks as having been dismembered, or captured, by the sea cutting into it, but Scott Simpson extends the idea considerably. '. . . the original East Lyn Valley was dismembered in a series of stages by marine capture at (a) Heddon's Mouth, (b) Woody Bay, (c) Wringcliff Bay, (d) Lynmouth. The capture at (or beyond) Heddon's Mouth was early, for the steep gradients produced have had some time to migrate upstream, leaving lower gradients at the mouth today. The Woody Bay capture produced the steep valley (now dry) at Lee Abbey. Before they had retreated far, a new capture at Wringcliff Bay diverted the river and 'froze' the rejuvenated slope at Lee Abbey. The steep gradients produced by this capture are similarly preserved in the Valley of the Rocks today as a result of the last capture at Lynmouth. The Lynmouth capture is so recent that the West Lyn still preserves the phenomenal fall of 400 ft. in its last mile . . .'

The coast between Lee Bay and Combe Martin is spectacular and its beauty is enhanced by the fine interior country adjacent to it. The slopes are heavily forested in Lee Bay and Woody Bay; Heddon's Mouth is a deep ravine, with extensive screes, extending down to sea-level. The views from the high ground at Martinhoe and Trentishoe are magnificent. But here as elsewhere it is, except at Heddon's Mouth and one or two other places, extremely difficult to reach the beach, which is usually boulder-strewn. The Great and Little Hangman are part of this high ground, forming usually bare moorland. The rocks are the Hangman Grits, and the coast is little indented, although there are several caves. There are also some small streams. Sherrycombe Water forms a good waterfall, and is not unlike Heddon's Mouth, but has a much steeper gradient, and ends in a sea-cut gully. All this stretch is characterised by hog's-back cliffs rising to 780 or 1,000 feet; the Great and Little Hangman are notably symmetrical, and Arber regards them, as well as Holdstone Down and Trentishoe Barrows, as resulting from the unequal weathering of a high table-land, because the Hangman Grits are here very resistant.

Westwards of the Little Hangman the Ilfracombe Beds reach the shore. At their junction with the Hangman Grits there is much contortion of the rocks. The cliffs hereabouts are lower, although generally of the hog's-back type. But the coast is far more broken and indented and beaches are more common. Combe Martin and Newberry Water are drowned valleys; near Watermouth the Ilfracombe Beds form low cliffs with many sharp points. It is also another drowned valley, and the stream of which it was part was approximately parallel to the coast at its lower end. Its seaward wall has been breached, and this gives rise to the islets of Sexton's Burrow and Burrow Nose. At Ilfracombe, Capstone and Lantern Hills are all that remains of the seaward wall of the East Wilder Brook, a feature in some ways comparable in origin to that of the Valley of the Rocks at Lynton. The Morte Slates where they outcrop at the coast are outside the National Park, but a brief mention is worth while since they give distinctive cliff scenery. They often form sharp glistening reefs and jagged outlines as at Damagehue Point. Bull Point is a right-angled turn in the coast, rather than a true promontory, and at Morte Point the low cliffs are once again of the hog's-back type.

Miss M. A. Arber, daughter of E. A. N. Arber, has written authoritatively about parts of our south-western coasts, and has discussed the nature and origin of hog's-back cliffs. Her father gave the name, but did not discuss their evolution. Professor Balchin noted that they occur where the coast is approximately parallel with the strike, and suggested that they were developed when severe climatic conditions enveloped this district, and also when sea-level stood lower, relative to the land, than it does today. Miss Arber concludes that the hog's-back form is directly related to geological structure. 'Where the true hog's-back is developed on the grandest scale, near Combe Martin, the regional dip is southerly and thus inland, so that the seaward slope from the crest is simply an escarpment cutting across the edges of the beds. Inland from the coast is a gentler dip-slope into a valley running more or less parallel with the coast, the opposite (southerly) side of the valley being another escarpment.' From this it follows that the steepness of any hog's-back cliff, apart from the lower part, in immediate contact with the waves, depends upon the pre-existing topography. The Hangman Grits, for example, weather into higher hills than do the Ilfracombe Beds. Nevertheless lithology has little direct influence, since the profile of the seaward slope depends mainly upon dip. At the Torrs (Ilfracombe) the bedding is horizontal and the cliff face vertical. There is, of course, a gradation in nature, and it is not always easy to draw a clear distinction between hog's-back, bevelled, and flat-topped cliffs, although the characteristic forms are easily identified.

It has been emphasized that marine erosion is not serious on the Exmoor coast since it is sheltered. For this reason it is difficult to agree wholeheartedly with Scott Simpson's views. The way in which he dismembers the Lyn has been noted. He recognizes that the rocks are resistant and protected, and in consequence pre-supposes the rapid erosion of a belt of weak rocks that formerly existed to seaward of the present coast. This in turn is made to depend upon a fault which brought soft Mesozoic rocks alongside the resistant Devonians. 'It is not unreasonable to suggest that such a basin as that of Porlock Vale once extended westwards past the Foreland. There may well have been a time when the coast east of Combe Martin swung many miles to the north, and may even have joined the South Wales coast on the east side of Swansea Bay. If then the coast, retreating eastwards, encountered the Lias clays within the Trias basin postulated, it might have quickly extended towards Bridgwater and brought virtually the present coast-line into existence as a marine fault-line escarpment.' This is interesting, but distinctly speculative. On the other hand, it is right that we should remain open-minded in these matters because there is no adequate explanation of many of the coastal features. Let us conclude by emphasizing once again the great beauty of this coast, and asking those who read this chapter to realize that there is no simple explanation of the physiography of Exmoor and its coast, and that that alone adds greatly to the interest of the area.

Those who may wish to study the physical features of Exmoor may find the references named in the Bibliography useful.

PLATE VI. Looking north over well cultivated farmlands to the bleak moors and the sea in the distance

PLATE VII. Valley of the Rocks, Lynton. This dry valley lies to the west of the town and the toll road leading to Lee Abbey and Woody Bay passes through it. There are rocks of curious shapes created by the weathering of the soft sandstone

PLATE VIII. Waters Meet. The East Lyn is joined by the tributary formed by Hoaroak Water and Farley Water. This popular site, situated in mixed hardwoods of great beauty, is easily reached from the A39 near Lynmouth

PLATE IX. Tarr Steps, showing the River Barle in Spate. The giant paving stones are mounted on piers composed of uprights and horizontals arranged to resist the pressure of spate water. The bridge is 180 feet long and there are fifteen "arches"

3

Plant Life

by A. D. HALLAM AND OLIVE HALLAM

THE soils of Exmoor National Park, almost everywhere deficient in lime, are composed mainly of peat and of mineral matter derived from the underlying rocks. The drainage is comparatively good where there is little or no peat, but the water-holding capacity is very great in areas where a considerable depth has accumulated.

Broadly speaking, the open country is divided between heather moor and grass moor, the former being more common over the sandstones and the latter over the slates. A narrow, impersistent outcrop of limestone, running from east to west across the region, produces little modification of the flora.

THE HEATHER MOORS

Burning at regular intervals to improve pasture (swaling), and fires started accidentally, tend to limit the stature of the plants on the heather moors. The most widespread of the heaths is true heather or ling (*Calluna vulgaris*). Bell heather (*Erica cinerea*) is common in drier and cross-leaved heath (*E. tetralix*) in wetter situations. Whortleberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) is abundant where the ground is not water-logged. Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), which also grows on well-drained slopes, appears to have increased on Exmoor, as elsewhere, during the present century. Sweet mountain fern (*Thelypteris limbosperma*), with lemon-scented fronds, often grows near the heads of combes. Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), and western gorse (*U. gallii*) form conspicuous patches. Fescues and bents are the commonest grasses, bristle bent (*Agrostis setacea*) being plentiful in some areas, and fine bent (*A. tenuis*) is universal. Some variety is given by the small white flowers of heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), yellow tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) and milkwort (*Polygala serpyllifolia*) in blue, purple or white. Birdsfoot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*) may be seen occasionally in short grass. The stiff spikes of heath rush (*Juncus squarrosus*), and the greyish leaves of carnation grass (*Carex panicea*) are noticeable.

Sphagnum moss occupies numerous wet patches on hillsides and in combes, and many interesting plants are associated with it. One of the most abundant is sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), which makes up for the nutritional deficiencies of an acid soil by 'digesting' the soft parts of insects caught up in its sticky, reddish, hairy leaves. A conspicuous plant is bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), with yellow flowers in erect spikes. Less common, but worth a search, is western butterwort (*Pinguicula lusitanica*), another insectivorous plant, with a single mauvish-pink flower arising from a rosette of pale greyish-green leaves. This is a west European species, confined in England to the south-west. Many different kinds of sedge and rush also occur in these bogs.

THE GRASS MOORS

On the grass moors purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*) is usually dominant. It is purple-tinged only in late summer when it is in flower. The young grey-green leaves become darker as summer advances, turn to tawny brown in late autumn and persist through the winter. In June the cotton grasses, common cotton grass and harestail (*Eriphorum angustifolium* and *E. vaginatum*) make white splashes that indicate wetter patches. Drier areas are often occupied by bent grasses, whose flower stalks fade to a light straw colour in winter. Among the few colourful plants are heath spotted orchid (*Dactylorchis maculata ssp. ericetorum*) and ivy-leaved bellflower (*Wahlenbergia hederacea*), sometimes in sufficient quantity to form a bluish carpet. In swamps near the heads of combes many sedges are found, tussock sedge (*Carex paniculata*) and bottle sedge (*C. rostrata*) being the most conspicuous.

On the Chains, an extensive and desolate plateau at an altitude of about 1,500 feet, the peat is deeper than usual, the rainfall very high, the water table at or near the surface all the year round, the soil water acid and the surface exposed to all winds. Such conditions are unfavourable for most plants, and, in fact, not more than about twenty-five species of flowering plants occur, most of them of the grass, sedge and rush families. In spite of its poor flora the area is of great ecological interest, being one of very few, and probably the largest in the south-west, where deer sedge (*Scirpus caespitosus*) is dominant. During late summer its leaves turn to a bright tawny shade, contrasting with the russet tinge of the cotton grass leaves. Old peat diggings, in which there is standing water, are marked by patches of common cotton grass, and harestail is scattered all over this deer sedge moor.

In the hundred years and more during which water has been dammed up in Pinkworthy Pond, an aquatic vegetation, unique on Exmoor, has developed. Around the margin of the pond is a zone of beaked sedge (*Carex rostrata*), associated in some places with bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), and occasionally replaced by sphagnum moss. As the water deepens, horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) and broad-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*) together form another zone, while the latter alone forms a third zone before deep open water is reached. These zones are not continuous all round the pond and are absent where the banks are rocky. Broad-leaved pondweed is not known elsewhere on Exmoor, where the usual species is bog-pondweed (*P. polygonifolius*).

RARE PLANTS

Among the rarer plants of the National Park are a number of northern species, surviving here near the southern limit of their range. Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) grows abundantly in at least four localities; cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) and lesser twayblade (*Listera cordata*), a miniature orchid, have been found only sparingly in two or three places. Parsley fern (*Cryptogramma crispa*) and oak fern (*Thelypteris dryopteris*) occur each in a single station where they are known to have persisted since the nineteenth century. Beech fern (*Thelypteris phegopteris*), bladder fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*) and both kinds of filmy fern (*Hymenophyllum tunbrigense* and *H. wilsonii*) occur sparingly. Stagshorn moss (*Lycopodium clavatum*) has been decreasing for many years and now seems to be in some danger of extinction. Fir clubmoss (*L. selago*) and Alpine clubmoss (*L. alpinum*), two northern species formerly recorded from Dunkery and Winsford Hill, have not been reported for fifty years.

Several alien species have become established in the area, one of the most successful being montbretia (*Crocosmia* × *crocosmiiflora*), which has spread vegetatively along the banks of the Barle. Giant valerian (*Valeriana pyrenaica*) is increasing in the neighbourhood of Dulverton, where it forms conspicuous patches. Silver ragwort (*Senecio cinerarea*) is naturalised on sea cliffs and on the shingle near Porlock. New Zealand willow-herb (*Epilobium nerterioides*) is a recent addition to the flora.

THE BRENDON HILLS

The Brendon Hill country has mostly been reclaimed from moorland for pasture and, more recently, for forestry. Neglected pastures soon revert to moorland. Drainage is often restricted by a layer of impermeable iron oxide (hardpan) forming in the neighbourhood of springs. Such areas are marked by the growth of rushes and large birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*). Where stagnation gives rise to high acidity, sphagnum bogs develop.

Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) flourishes abundantly in the shade of the beech hedges; foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) and sheepsbit (*Jasione montana*) are characteristic of the sunnier banks and tufted hair grass (*Deschampsia caespitosa*) is conspicuous. Many common plants are to be found at lower altitudes in hedges and by the banks of streams, but lime-loving species are absent from the greater part of the area.

THE PORLOCK VALLEY

The Porlock valley, protected from most winds by the hills encircling it, contains a great variety of lowland habitats—shingle and saltmarsh, woodland, meadow and pasture—on a number of geological formations widely different from the rocks of Exmoor and the Brendon Hills. Sea campion (*Silene maritima*) and thrift (*Armeria maritima*), both also found on cliffs, grow in cushions on the landward side of the shingle bank, where, too, several small maritime clovers may be found. Reeds (*Phragmites communis*) line the old decoy pool; seablite (*Suaeda maritima*), sea milkwort (*Glaux maritima*) and sea spurrey (*Spergularia marina*) and greater sea spurrey (*S. media*) are to be found on the saltmarsh nearby. Alexanders (*Smyrnium olusatrum*), formerly grown as a pot-herb, flourishes near settlements. The yellow form of white mullein (*Verbascum lychnitis*) is one of the rare plants of this district. Several exotic plants have become naturalised, *Berberis glaucocarpa* and *Leycesteria formosa* among them. On the slopes above Allerford, holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) planted early in the last century has spread naturally and now covers a large area.

East of Selworthy, an outcrop of Lower Lias forms a calcareous clay soil, supporting mixed woodland very different in character from the 'dry oakwood' described below. A dense growth of shrubs includes dogwood (*Thelycrania sanguinea*), privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) and spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*). Some of the lime-loving herbs to be found here are madder (*Rubia peregrina*), gladdon (*Iris foetidissima*), melilot (*Melilotus altissima*), wood spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*), hairy St. John's wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*). Such an assemblage is not to be seen anywhere else in the National Park.

WOODLANDS

Although there is no evidence that the area covered by the Royal Forest of Exmoor has supported any appreciable amount of timber in historic times, the numerous manors surrounding it, which are now included in the National Park, nearly all possessed some woodland at the time of the Domesday Survey. There were, for instance, in 1086, 100 acres of woodland in Culbone, 300 acres in Porlock and 15 acres in Oare.

Today most of the combes are well wooded in their lower parts, the tree line being usually about 1,000 feet above sea-level; but exposure to wind is the limiting factor rather than altitude. Scattered bushes of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) sculptured by the wind are often seen above the tree line. The effect of strong winds is evident in the stunted growth of pine on the seaward side of the road between Porlock and Lynmouth.

The two species of oak are the dominant trees in the valleys of the rivers that flow into the Bristol Channel. There is, in general, a preponderance of the durmast oak (*Quercus petraea*) at higher altitudes and of the pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) at lower levels. The presence of numerous hybrids between these two species points to natural regeneration. This is still taking place, but its scale is limited by deer and other animals that eat the seedlings.

These woods probably occupy the sites of primeval oakwoods near the streams, but most of them have been replanted and extended. Weir Wood and Badgworthy Wood may be remnants of natural woods: the wide spaces between the durmast oaks and the absence of hard and fast boundaries distinguish these from planted woods. The absence of natural regeneration in Weir Wood today may be contrasted with its relative abundance in the East Lyn valley. Most of the oakwoods were formerly coppiced, the bark being used for the tanning industry, the best of the wood for poles and the rest for charcoal.

On the margins of the oakwoods, holly (*Ilex aquifolia*) and mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*) are commonly found. Among other components of the woods are wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and birch (*Betula pubescens*). A small tree, *Sorbus vexans*, closely related to whitebeam (*S. aria*) is scattered about the coastal woods and is not known to occur anywhere else in Britain.

Beneath the trees heather and whortleberry bushes grow taller than on the open moor. Ferns are abundant, often growing to a large size near the streams. The commonest species are broad buckler fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*), male fern (*D. filix-mas*), and golden-scaled male fern (*D. borreri*) and lady fern (*Athyrium filix-foemina*). The hay-scented fern (*Dryopteris aemula*) is less widespread. In some of the woods which clothe the seaward slopes great woodrush (*Luzula sylvatica*) forms an almost continuous carpet beneath old oak coppice with occasional sycamore (*Acer pseudo-platanus*).

Golden saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*) often lines the sides of watercourses with its cushions of leaves. Common cow-wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*), is a characteristic flower in the woods. Among the rarer species may be noted Irish spurge (*Euphorbia hyberna*), wood stitchwort (*Stellaria nemorum*) and stone bramble (*Rubus saxatilis*).

The valleys of the rivers which join the Exe and eventually flow into the English Channel are also well wooded. Many of the oak-woods are of the same semi-natural character as those described above, but there was much ornamental planting in the nineteenth century. Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), oak (*Quercus robur*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) are the commonest trees, while variety is provided by sycamore (*Acer pseudo-platanus*), turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). Conifers scattered through the plantations provide effective contrast of colour and form. Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) grows plentifully among the taller trees; alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and willow (*Salix spp.*) line the river banks. Common rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), planted as cover for pheasants, has become naturalised. Larch plantations occur at intervals, but broad-leaved trees greatly outnumber conifers in the Barle, Exe and Haddeo valleys. There was extensive felling in both world wars, and some replanting has been carried out in recent years.

The beech hedges, which are a feature of the landscape, have all been planted and very seldom produce seedlings. Birch Cleave at Simonsbath, at an altitude of nearly 1,200 feet, deserves mention as the highest beechwood in the south-west. It was planted about 1820.

During the last fifty years the Brendon Hills have been completely transformed by the planting of State forests. The Forestry Commission acquired land in the neighbourhood of Luxborough soon after the First World War, and planting began in 1921. Brendon Forest now occupies about 2,750 acres on Croydon Hill and on the main Brendon range. Among the species planted are Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), Corsican pine (*P. nigra ssp. laricio*), European larch (*Larix decidua*), Japanese larch (*L. leptolepis*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*), Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), Sitka spruce (*P. sitchensis*) and Western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*). High rainfall makes the district less suitable for pines than for spruce and hemlock, and these have been more extensively planted in recent years.

Beech is planted, not necessarily for timber, but to provide shelter for young conifers. Oak is also occasionally planted, but the proportion of broad-leaved trees in Brendon Forest is insignificant. The darkness of coniferous woods precludes the growth of much ground cover, but fungi flourish under the trees. Although conifers are not native to the region, seeds from planted parents of Scots pine germinate readily and grow to mature trees in sheltered positions, especially if given some protection from deer. Corsican pine and Western hemlock also regenerate occasionally.

There is no space for description of the abundant mosses, liverworts, lichens and fungi of the area; a survey of these would require a separate chapter. The reader who is interested in these groups is referred to the Bibliography.

With the exception of the Porlock valley, the flora of Exmoor National Park is not a rich one, and its study has, on the whole, been neglected by botanists. The beauty of its colouring at all seasons fully compensates for any lack of variety. For those with time and patience, there is also the possibility of discoveries yet to be made.

4

The Animals of the Park

by IAN LINN

To the visitor, one of the greatest charms of Exmoor lies in its variety. This is reflected in the scenery of the region, so that, within a space of a few miles, cosy villages give way to bleak, windswept moorland, and sheltered woodlands to soaring, exposed sea cliffs. This variety also has its influence on the fauna of the area, so that, although the fauna of certain parts of Exmoor may be specialised and impoverished, the fauna of the area as a whole is extremely rich. The very great range of birds, for instance, to be seen within the limits of the Exmoor National Park, presents a considerable attraction to the naturalist.

The birds of the high open moor are perhaps those which give the region its unique flavour. Here it is that the lonely walker, happening upon an upland pool, will put up a heron. As he watches it fly off with slow, powerful wing beats, his attention may be caught by the deep, harsh croak of a raven. Searching the sky, he will find the black outline as the bird flies over, very high, and may be able to discern its characteristic wedge-shaped tail. The raven usually breeds on ledges on cliffs and mountains, but will occasionally choose other sites. I know of one pair which regularly nests every year on top of the high chimney of a disused mine building, and on Exmoor it is not uncommon for ravens to nest in trees. The young are often said to be hideously ugly, but I find the gapes, as the youngsters beg for food, quite beautiful, the mouths showing a most delicate structure and subtle tints of pink and red which contrast with the dull, dark plumage.

Another member of the crow family, the carrion crow, is common on the moor. Solitary, like the raven, it is a much smaller bird with a squarer tail. Essentially a tree nester, it favours on Exmoor the solitary hawthorn trees common on the slopes of some of the high valleys. By contrast, the gregarious rook is not usually thought of as a moorland bird, yet there is at least one rookery in a clump of trees at an upland farm on Exmoor.

Common though members of the crow family may be on the moor, the birds of prey are more spectacular, and perhaps excite more interest. Buzzards and kestrels are both common. The former is to my mind one of Britain's finest birds, resembling as it does a small eagle. Seen at close quarters the powerful beak and claws, and the fierce eye, are much in evidence. It is particularly impressive to see one or two birds, or even a family party, sailing in slow circles on motionless wings, primaries spread and upcurved, tails fanned out widely, as they seek their prey. Rabbits were once their staple diet, but myxomatosis has changed that. Nowadays they spend most of their time in pursuit of smaller game, and they may even be seen scratching for small invertebrates in a field like any barnyard fowl. I have also seen them hover, presumably to hold some prospective prey in view until the moment is right to pounce. On the sea cliffs of Exmoor the buzzards nest on ledges, but on the moor proper they use trees, tall ones where possible, but occasionally having recourse to a small hawthorn.

The kestrel is in many respects the opposite of the buzzard, small, sharp-winged and fast-moving where the buzzard is large, blunt-winged and slow. Good close views can sometimes be had of both birds when they perch on a telegraph pole or fence post at the roadside. The most exciting view of the kestrel, however, is of it sweeping down wind at tremendous speed, to come up into the wind and hover on rapidly beating wings while scanning the terrain below. It is not always realised that, when hovering, it is holding itself absolutely motionless in a fixed point in space, in the face of all manner of wind currents and eddies. This can easily be seen if you are on a crag or the rim of a combe above a hovering falcon, and can line it up with some object on the ground. It is startling to discover that after many seconds, or even a minute or two, the bird is still in the same point in space. The keenness of eye and the physical coordination needed to perform this feat are remarkable.

A much rarer falcon which may be seen on the moors is the merlin. The colouring of this beautiful bird is reminiscent of the peregrine, but it is much smaller; the female is about kestrel size, while the tiercel is markedly smaller. Even at a distance, however, the merlin is unlikely to be confused with a kestrel, as its manner of hunting is entirely different. It does not hover and stoop like a kestrel, but rather hunts in a hawk-like manner, beating across the ground at low altitude and chasing and catching the prey which it flushes. Another important difference from the kestrel is that, although it will occasionally use old carrion crow nests, the merlin is by preference a ground nester, preferring the deep heather of the upland combes.

The visitor to Exmoor may also be fortunate enough to see another bird of prey with long wings and a narrow tail, and a characteristic low quartering flight. This is Montagu's harrier, which nests very rarely on the moor, and is by no means common in this part of the world. The peregrine falcon must also be mentioned. The wide, open moors and the sea cliffs provide the right habitat for this powerful, fast-flying bird, and, although it is not often seen, it does occur on Exmoor. The sparrow hawk, which has become rather scarce in Britain of recent years, may still be seen occasionally.

The birds of prey are not, of course, the only birds of interest on the moor. One of the most spectacularly beautiful is the blackcock, with his glossy blue-black plumage, the scarlet wattle above his eye, and his splendid lyre-shaped tail, so beloved by the Scots as a bonnet adornment. Seen at the lek (as he may still be in April or May at a few places on Exmoor, I am glad to say, some of them in plain view from the road) parading before his dowdy wife, the greyhen, and offering violence to other cocks, he is a handsome, arrogant, charming fellow indeed. Black game have been declining in numbers of recent years, and are now rather scarce. Their close cousin, the red grouse, though less spectacular perhaps, is still a bird of great beauty and character, and has the added distinction of being the only bird found nowhere but in the British Isles. Unlike the black game, which are indigenous, the red grouse has been introduced to Exmoor. It is pleasant to record that, for the moment at any rate, the smaller species seems to be holding its own. It would be regrettable indeed if the sight of a covey of red grouse hurtling low over the heather on half-closed wings, or the sound of the male crying *go-back* on a hot summer afternoon, were to be lost from Exmoor.

Two birds whose voices are characteristic of the high, open moor are the curlew and the ring ouzel. Both breed on Exmoor. The wild, lonely *cour-li* of the curlew is tremendously evocative, and brings back for me a flood of memories of many places, always desolate and beautiful, and always (such are the tricks the memory plays) bathed in evening sunshine, the air warm and still. The curlew is seen at its best in flight against the sky, so that its downcurved bill shows up clearly.

The ring ouzel is not too difficult to find in the upland combes. Looking much like a blackbird with a white bib, its sharp, repeated alarm note is also reminiscent of the commoner species. The clear, piping *pee-u* of the ring ouzel, and its brief song, belong to the high moor, where this bird nests among the heather and rocks, usually close to a clear upland stream.

Still by the water, we may mention two birds which nest by Exmoor streams, the dipper and the grey wagtail. The latter looks very smart as he flies from rock to rock or feeds at the water's edge, his bright yellow breast belying his name. He prefers for his nest site a crevice in a wall or bridge, or a hole in a bank.

The dipper also likes holes in banks for his nest, or perhaps crevices under waterfalls or bridges. Built like a large wren, with a conspicuous white bib, he is also unmistakable in flight, whirring low and straight over the water like a mechanical toy. I never tire of watching this bird feed—the business-like efficiency with which he plunges into the stream and fossicks about on the bottom, emerging with a beakful of food for his family, contrasts strangely with the neurotic-looking spasmodic bobbing movements as he stands on a rock between dives.

Leaving the streams for more open ground, we may mention briefly a few of the typical birds of the uplands—the wheatear, showing his white rump as he flies from stone to stone ahead of the walker; the meadow pipit, common on all parts of the moor; the whinchat and stonechat, so similar in habits and behaviour that their call or a good close look is needed to distinguish them; the snipe zig-zagging away from your feet in an upland marsh; the golden plover which sometimes comes from the north to flock in numbers on the moor in winter; and the occasional rarity like the snow bunting. And so we might go on—but not all of Exmoor is upland, and there are many interesting birds to be found in the hanging woods, or the marshes of Porlock, or even in the gardens of guest houses and hotels.

As a complete contrast to the high moors, we find in Porlock marsh a relatively small area in which many interesting birds congregate. Here is the only place for many miles in which may be found the ducks, waders and other birds which demand as their habitat reed beds and estuaries. In summer it provides breeding places, in spring and autumn a resting place for migrants, and in winter sanctuary for birds from further north.

Winter-visiting geese are at all times rare at Porlock; brent and white-fronted geese are seen on occasion, greylag very seldom indeed. Ducks are common. Teal and wigeon may often be seen, tufted duck and shoveler rather seldom.

Waders are to be seen at all times. Of particular interest in winter are the migrants from more northerly latitudes—turnstones, looking less smart than in their summer livery; knot, rather pale and remarkably tame when walked up; greenshanks with long slender bills and very white backs; green sandpipers, darkish in colour, shy and solitary. Although in summer these visitors have gone north and east to their breeding grounds, many other wading species of great charm and beauty are to be seen. A great favourite of mine, which breeds in Porlock marsh, is the ringed plover. I remember once noticing, among a group of these attractive birds, one individual whose movements were different from the others. Looking carefully, I saw that it had only one leg, so that it had to hop rather than walk—yet it balanced as well on its one slim limb as the others did on two, and was just as active and well fed.

Several other waders can be seen commonly in summer—oystercatchers, dunlin, common sandpipers and redshanks, for example—and there is always the exciting possibility of a rarity such as a ruff. The times of spring and autumn migration are times to keep an eye open for rare visitors on passage—the little stint, for example, has been seen on a few occasions on Porlock marsh on the way from its winter quarters in Spain or Portugal to its breeding grounds on the tundra of Lapland. Though it is not strictly a wader, one might mention here the sandpiper-like grey phalarope, which is also a rare transient visitor to the marsh.

The reed beds which cover part of Porlock marsh, in addition to providing cover for the ducks, have a special bird fauna of their own, the most characteristic member of which is the sedge warbler. A few reed buntings are also to be found in this area, and the marsh warbler has been seen or heard on rare occasions.

Being so near the sea, Exmoor has a distinctly marine flavour to its bird fauna. The gulls, particularly the ubiquitous herring gull, come inland and are seen at times all over the moor. Black-backs, both greater and lesser, and blackheaded gulls, are all frequently seen, and even the common gull (which is much less common here than the herring gull) is regularly observed. The truly marine species, which do not come inland, are found most commonly along the cliff-bound coast between Lynton and Combe Martin. Here may be seen the dark shapes of cormorant and shag winging low over the water. In spring, guillemots and, particularly, razorbills, nest along these cliffs. A particularly welcome newcomer is the fulmar, which colonised these cliffs about the mid-nineteen-fifties and is now well established as a breeding species. It is to be hoped that we may continue for many years yet to enjoy seeing these birds circling in stiff-winged gliding flight off Exmoor's sea cliffs. A specially fine sight which may sometimes be seen from these cliffs is a group of gannets wheeling high over the water, their great white black-tipped wings catching the sunlight; every now and then one will drop almost vertically on half closed wings and plunge into the sea, to reappear in a few moments and gulp down a fish.

Of course, it is not necessary to go to wild and lonely places to see interesting birds in the Exmoor area. A remarkable feature of the region is the numerous woods and coppices, which provide a suitable habitat for a wide range of woodland species. Nightjars, for example, are found in a few places, and walking in the twilight near a wood one may hear their churring song, or see one flitting round a tree, now hovering for a moment, now swooping in to pick off an insect. This species, which will often spend the daylight hours squatting on the ground, has a particular liking for sitting on tarmac roads which have been warmed by the sun.

Another ground-nesting bird found on heaths and commons and around woods is the woodlark. It is a less common bird than its close relative, the skylark, which it closely resembles. It is, however, smaller, and its voice, though less powerful than that of the skylark, is considered by many to be more melodious. Its song is less varied and less sustained than that of the skylark, and like the skylark's, is often delivered on the wing.

In the woods proper there are many more species than can be mentioned in the available space. The bold, handsome jay may occasionally be seen, perhaps alone by the roadside picking at a dead rabbit killed by a car, perhaps with a party of his fellows making his noisy way from tree to tree. Another bird, very different from the jay, which has the habit of travelling through the woods in parties, is the long-tailed tit. In winter, when the leaves are gone, groups of these pretty little birds may be seen making their restless, acrobatic way through the topmost branches, calling as they go.

The oaks of the Exmoor woods provide excellent nesting holes for the redstart, whose rusty red tail, constantly flickering, will often give him away. He also nests in dry walls and other suitable crevices. Young redstarts look very like the robins which are such a feature of many of these woods, and which also nest in holes in trees, walls and banks. I find that the company of these friendly, confiding birds adds greatly to the pleasure of a walk through the Exmoor woods.

Spotted flycatchers are fairly common, nesting up to an altitude of 1,100 feet in old woods. Although Exmoor is getting towards the southern end of its breeding range in Britain, the pied flycatcher is found in a few places in woods and gardens. Normally it nests in holes in trees or walls, but it will occasionally use a man-made nest box. Woodland valleys with streams are a favourite habitat for this smartly-plumaged bird.

Several species of warblers are present, of course, and will often be heard and, by the knowledgeable, distinguished by their calls. They will also be seen occasionally as they search for their insect food among the foliage, but they are extremely difficult to distinguish by sight alone in the field, although their behaviour may sometimes offer a clue. Chiffchaff, willow warbler, wood warbler, blackcap and garden warbler are all common in the summer.

Among the larger birds, a variety of woodpeckers may be seen and heard. The green woodpecker is common, and easily identified by its undulating flight, and the penetrating laugh which gives it its other name of 'yaffle'. This bird often feeds on the ground and may frequently be seen in quite public places, such as the lawns of houses. The spotted woodpeckers, on the other hand, are seldom seen, although both the great and the lesser occur in Exmoor woods. They seldom feed on the ground, and prefer to spend their time high in the tree tops. Their presence is given away, however, by their loud drumming on resonant dead branches.

Although it is easier to consider the major habitats separately, it must be remembered that the dissected nature of much of the Exmoor region provides a wide range of minor habitats which support a rich and varied bird fauna. Arable land, hedges, coppices, orchards, gardens, scrub land, and so on, all have their characteristic birds. Thus, in winter, one may see redwings and fieldfares, visiting from their northerly breeding grounds. In scrubby woodland the redpoll may occasionally be seen, and has even been known to breed on rare occasions. On bushy commons the red-backed shrike may sometimes be found. Even the humble garden bird table will attract a wide range of birds. The following birds have all been recorded at bird tables at one time or another in this area: blue, great, cole and marsh tits; nuthatch, dunnock and goldcrest; greenfinch, goldfinch and siskin; nightingale and cirl bunting.

The richness and variety of the Exmoor avifauna tempt one to linger on the birds, but of course many other animals of interest may be found there. The streams of the area are rich in brown trout, and both sea trout and salmon run up to the Exmoor area to spawn. Frogs and toads are both common, the latter perhaps more commonly seen on the open moor than the former.

Common lizards will be readily found on warm, sunny days on the moor, particularly where the vegetation is of tussocky grass. They are easily seen as they move rapidly when disturbed, and so draw attention to themselves. Adders, on the other hand, though also common, tend to lie very still, or slide off quietly when disturbed, so that they are only seldom seen.

Less common on the high moor, and more characteristic of the lower areas, are the slow-worm and the grass snake. Both may be seen sunning themselves on open hillsides, or may be found by turning over logs or large stones. Both are delightful animals, and quite harmless, but it should be remembered that the slow-worm is in reality a legless lizard, and will, like the common lizard, shed its tail if roughly handled, while the grass snake, if upset, will give vent to a most evil-smelling secretion. With care, however, both these reptiles may be examined closely if found—and both will repay closer examination as their colours, especially if newly moulted, are brilliantly beautiful.

Among the mammals, pride of place must of course be given to the red deer. These noble beasts are treated in detail in Chapter 5 of this book, and so will receive no more than a bare mention here.

Running them a close second, however, are the Exmoor ponies. Although they are treated as domestic stock elsewhere in the book, they deserve a place in this chapter, as the possibility exists that the Exmoor pony is not, like other British 'wild' horses, such as the Dartmoor, the New Forest or the Shetland, merely a feral descendant of domestic stock gone wild, but, ranking alongside the tarpan of Mongolia and Turkestan, a genuine wild species. This would mean that the Exmoor stock has its origin in a truly wild population which managed to live through the rigorous climatic conditions of the Ice Ages. Although this view is by no means universally accepted, it is strongly supported by a number of outstanding zoologists of the highest repute, and the theory at least deserves serious consideration. If true, it would mean that the Exmoor is of great historic and evolutionary interest, as the only true wild horse of Britain. The Exmoor pony is still a hardy, agile creature, well adapted to survive the severest winters. These ponies are greatly valued both for themselves and for bloodstock breeding. Not all ponies on the moor are pure bred. The true Exmoor is bay, dun or brown in colour, with no white hairs or markings of any kind; the muzzle and the inside of the ears are a characteristic oatmeal colour.

Seeing a group of real Exmoors, untainted by any domestic stock, one is struck by the remarkable similarity in appearance of the animals. This genetic homogeneity is characteristic of wild horses found in other parts of the world, and at variance with the appearance of groups of other British 'wild' horses, such as Dartmoor or New Forest ponies, in which individuals differ widely from one another in colour and markings. One of the most valuable characteristics of the Exmoor pony, which makes it so useful for breeding into domestic strains, is the strong curved bone of the jaw, in which the teeth are set in a powerful radiating pattern, well adapted for grinding up rough natural food. This anatomical feature tallies well with the structure of the jaws of present-day Asian wild horses, and with fossil material, and differs greatly from the shorter, straighter jaws and weaker, less efficient teeth of many domestic horses inbred over many generations towards artificial standards of beauty.

Turning to smaller mammals, we find that the fox is common on Exmoor, to such an extent that, although hunting on the moor tends to be associated with the red deer, in fact a great deal of effort goes into hunting the fox. As usual, this intelligent and adaptable animal manages to survive despite persecution, and although a number of farmers will undoubtedly deplore his depredations, at least an equal number of people will thrill to the sight of a beautiful beast. The badger is also common on Exmoor, although he tends to shun the open highlands, and prefers the richer lowland parts, where earthworms are more plentiful.

Polecats were undoubtedly common on the moor in olden times, but for many years now this handsome though unsavoury beast has been extinct on the moor. Such reports as occur from time to time, tending to suggest that the wild polecat still persists, undoubtedly have their origin in some escaped ferret which, if he is the brown variety, is not easy to distinguish from the true polecat without close examination.

A close relative of the polecat which may appear on the moor is the mink. This is a North American species which has become established in Britain as a result of escapes from fur farms. It seems to find our climate to its liking, for it has in recent years become widely established. It is dark brown—almost black—in appearance, relieved only by a white patch under the chin, and is found usually near water. It swims well, but may also be seen on land along river banks, and among rocks and dry walls.

Still smaller carnivores which may be found on the moor are the stoats and weasels. Stoats are the larger of the two, brown above and creamy below. In the north in winter they turn pure white except for the black tip to their tail, and are then called ermines. On Exmoor on the whole they follow the southern trend and stay brown in winter. A few individuals may show some white in winter, but if this happens the white is patchy, and seldom is the animal pure white all over—usually some brown patches remain. Weasels are rather commoner than stoats in this region, yet are more rarely seen because of their more retiring disposition. They may occasionally be heard giving their shrill bark as they hunt in some hedgerow, but they seldom show themselves. They are smaller than stoats, lack the black tail tip, and never go white in winter, even partially.

Turning from the true carnivores to the insectivores, we find that shrews are common everywhere, and moles occur in suitable pasture fields. The most obvious insectivore is, however, the hedgehog. This charming animal is not found much on the high moor, but is very common on the lower parts of the Exmoor area, particularly towards the south where its pathetic remains are all too often seen on the roads. A happier encounter with this animal may be the lot of the evening walker, who will be surprised at the light, brisk gait which is characteristic of this animal when not petrified by some oncoming juggernaut.

Rabbits are common all over the Exmoor area, in many different types of habitat. Although hit by myxomatosis, the Exmoor stock has perhaps been affected less severely than many others, as the isolated nature of many of the warrens impedes the transmission of the disease and so reduces its impact. Brown hares, although of course much scarcer than rabbits, are relatively common in the area.

Among the rodents proper, wood mice, bank voles and short-tailed voles are of course common and widespread. Both the dormouse and the harvest mouse will be found, and their beautifully made nests should be looked for in coppices and hedge bottoms. Both species are, however, scarce and extremely local.

It seems, regrettably, that the Exmoor area, like most of the British Isles, has succumbed to the invasion of that likeable rascal, the American grey squirrel. The infinitely more beautiful native red squirrel appears now to be extinct in the region, but a few may survive in the deepest woods, particularly around Porlock and Dunster, and the walker should keep a sharp lookout for them.

Turning now to the invertebrates, we may look first of all at a few of the more spectacular and common beetles which may be seen by the walker on Exmoor. The large, black dor beetles (of which *Geotrupes stercorarius* is the most usual on the moor) will be seen often on the ground near dung, or flying at dusk, from April to October. Superficially similar to the dor beetles are the bloody-nosed beetles, whose habit of ejecting a bright red fluid from the mouth as a defence mechanism gives them their name. They may be seen on grassy banks and paths from April to June. The commonest is *Timarcha tenebricosa*, but the smaller *Timarcha goettingensis*, which is rather more local in distribution, may also be found. Other beetles with a curious defence mechanism are the oil beetles (usually *Melöe violaceus* or *M. proscarabaeus* on Exmoor) which exude a yellow oily fluid from the joints when disturbed. They are blue-black in colour with short elytra and a protruding abdomen, and are variable in size, being sometimes quite large. The antennae of the males are curious in having a kink about the middle. These beetles are common in grassy places in spring and summer. Another big black beetle is *Typhaeus typhoeus*, found locally in sandy places near rabbit dung. This beetle is remarkable for the two long horns on either side, and the shorter central horn, which the male carries pointing forwards on its thorax. The female has similar but smaller horns.

In contrast to the sober colours of the beetles mentioned so far is the brilliant livery of the green tiger beetle (*Cicindela campestris*). This conspicuous beetle may be met with in early spring and summer in sandy and open places, such as tracks on the moor, running actively and perhaps flying for short distances, particularly if the sun is warm. Its colour is bright green, with parts of the legs copper-red.

Many species of click beetles of the family Elateridae are to be found on the moor. They are long, oval beetles, brown in colour or sometimes of a metallic tint, which are commonly to be seen flying or basking in the sun. If one of these beetles finds itself on its back, it is able, by a mechanism which is not yet fully understood, to leap into the air, at the same time emitting an audible click. A good performer will continue to do this until it finds itself once more the right way up.

A grasshopper of dry heaths and moorlands which occurs commonly on Exmoor is the mottled grasshopper (*Myrmeleotetix maculatus*). This animal has a number of colour varieties, the darkest of which are a good match for the peaty moorland soil, and it should be looked for where the vegetation is thin, revealing patches of bare ground, or where the vegetation has been burnt off. The paler forms, on the other hand, are well camouflaged when on heather. A related species found on the moor which is also well camouflaged on dark soil is the common ground-hopper (*Tetrix undulata*).

Many different dragonflies and damselflies may be found in the Exmoor area. Common damselflies are the common blue damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*), the common ischnura (*Ischnura elegans*), the large red damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*) and the green lestes (*Lestes sponsa*)—the last perhaps rather more local than the first three. Common dragonflies are the four-spotted libellula (*Libellula quadrimaculata*), the common aeschna (*Aeschna juncea*), the common sympetrum (*Sympetrum striolatum*) and the black sympetrum (*S. danae*). Four other species which occur on Exmoor are worthy of special mention.

Three of these are characteristically found by swiftly-flowing streams—the golden-ringed dragonfly (*Cordulegaster boltoni*), the demoiselle agrion (*Agrion virgo*), and the white-legged damselfly (*Platycnemis pennipes*). The golden-ringed dragonfly is typically an inhabitant of moorlands and heaths and is easily recognized by its black and yellow wasp-like colouring. The female is further distinguished by having a large, black ovipositor. A much smaller animal is the demoiselle agrion, which has a brilliant green or blue body.

The female has pinkish fawn wings, and the male smoky brown wings if immature, and deep metallic blue or purple wings when mature. This species has a courtship dance, in which the coloured wings play an important part. The demoiselle agrion prefers swift, rather acid streams, with a sandy or gravelly bottom, and some trees on the banks. The white-legged damselfly is a Mediterranean species, and on Exmoor is approaching the northern limit of its range. It has a blue body, and part of the second and third pairs of legs enlarged and conspicuously white. Like the demoiselle agrion, the white-legged damselfly has a courtship dance, during which the male dangles his white legs in front of the female.

The broad-bodied libellula (*Libellula depressa*), unlike the previously mentioned species, prefers still or slowly moving water, which must not be acid. However, it has been recorded near Hunter's Inn, and is an animal of great beauty. It is a large insect, and remarkable, as its name suggests, for a great breadth of abdomen. This abdomen is a tawny brown colour with yellow spots down the edge in females and immature males, but in adult males the tawny brown colour gives way to a beautiful light blue, making a very striking pattern indeed.

The moths of Exmoor combine the typical moorland species with the many others which inhabit the lower-lying areas. Among the essentially moorland species pride of place is taken by the emperor moth (*Saturnia pavonia*), which feeds as a caterpillar mainly on the heaths and heathers. This large, handsome animal is a strong flier, and may be seen on Exmoor on fine evenings in late spring. Other moths well adapted to life among heather are the common heath (*Ematurga atomaria*), the true lover's knot (*Lycophotia porphyrea*) and the beautiful yellow underwing (*Amarta myrtilli*). In all these three species the caterpillar feeds on heaths and heathers, while the adult is well camouflaged when at rest among the heather.

Not all moorland moths live among heather. The caterpillars of some, such as the antler moth (*Charaeas graminis*), the marbled minor (*Procus strigilis*) and the fox moth (*Macrothylacia rubi*), feed on grasses and rushes, while the drinker moth (*Philudoria potatoria*) is usually found in bogs and wet places, its caterpillar feeding on the coarse grasses and reeds which grow there. On bilberry, on the other hand, one may find caterpillars of the northern spinach moth (*Lygris populata*), the beautiful snout (*Bomolocha frontis*) and the smoky wave (*Scopula ternata*) (the last also commonly on sallow and heather).

Some of these moths are of particular interest because of their geographical distribution. Animals whose distribution in Britain is mainly northern, and which are found in the south only on moors and uplands, are often thought to be 'glacial relicts'. Such animals are believed to have become well adapted to the cold conditions just south of the ice which covered most of Britain during the Ice Ages, and to have moved north at the end of the last Ice Age (some 10,000 years ago) leaving behind populations surviving only in those localities where the climate suited them best. Exmoor is one of those localities and among the moths mentioned previously the following are regarded as possible glacial relicts: the smoky wave, which is common on moors in Scotland, North England and Wales, but scarce and local on Exmoor; the beautiful yellow underwing, which, although itself generally distributed on moors throughout Britain, belongs to a genus typically arctic-alpine; and the beautiful snout, which lacks a northern distribution, but is thought to have been left behind on the moors or Ireland, Wales and South England by the retreating ice.

A typical glacial relict is the grey mountain carpet moth (*Entephria caesiata*), found on moors in North England, North Wales, Ireland and Scotland. In the south it occurs only on certain parts of Exmoor and Dartmoor—it was first noticed on Exmoor in 1909 and rediscovered in 1947. The caterpillar feeds on bilberry, heath and heather, and the adult, which flies in June and July, is well camouflaged when resting on rocks or stone walls.

The south-west of England was never glaciated during the Ice Ages, and one result of this is that small colonies of some animals survived the cold periods in particularly favoured localities, sometimes also developing special adaptations to assist survival. Exmoor moths which appear to have done this are the scarce blackneck (*Ophiusa craccae*) and the black-banded moth (*Antitype xanthomista*). The scarce blackneck is found in Britain only on the northern coasts of Cornwall and Devon, and feeds as a caterpillar on the wood vetch; the black-banded is similarly distributed with the addition of the Isle of Man, and feeds as a caterpillar on plantains and thrift.

One final result of the Ice Ages was that some species were driven completely out of Britain by the cold, surviving either on the Continent or land to the south-west of present-day Britain revealed by the falling sea-level, and re-invading Britain when the climate warmed up again. A curious present-day situation results in some animals from the species splitting into populations which kept a northern distribution and survived the rigorous conditions of the Ice Ages, and southern populations which recolonised in post-glacial times. Thus on Exmoor there are three moth species in which the northern form with typical glacial-relict distribution inhabits the uplands, while the surrounding lowlands are inhabited by a different form of the same species which has all the characteristics of a post-glacial invader. These are the oak eggar (*Lasiocampa quercus*), the July highflier (*Hydriomena furcata*) and the pyralid microlepidopteran (*Scoparia ambigualis*).

The moorland race of the oak eggar, which is known as the northern eggar (*L. q. callunae*), feeds as a caterpillar on a variety of plants, including heather, and takes two years to complete its life cycle (a typically northern adaptation). As a result the adult flies early, in May and June. The typical oak eggar (*L. q. quercus*), in contrast to the moorland habitat of the northern eggar, frequen ts hedgerows, wood borders, commons, cliffs and sand dunes. The caterpillar eats brambles and other shrubs, and the life cycle is completed in a year, the adult flying in July and August, later than the northern form.

The situation with *Scoparia ambigualis* is similar, the woodland subspecies *S. a. ambigualis* appearing as an adult in May and June, while the moorland *S. a. atomalis* flies in July and August.

In the July highflier the two forms ecologically and spatially isolated are a small, early-flying (June) form, which frequents moorlands and woods where bilberry grows, and feeds as a caterpillar mainly on bilberry and heather; and a larger, late-flying (July, August) form which prefers hedgerows, wood margins and marshes, and feeds typically on sallow as a caterpillar.

The northern spinach moth presents an anomalous case. It is not clear whether this is a glacial survivor or a post-glacial immigrant.

Of the butterflies, again a very wide range of species may be met with, from the very common meadow brown (*Maniola jurtina*) to the migrant clouded yellow (*Colias croceus*), or the spectacular red admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*), or the scarce peacock (*Nymphalis io*). But, as with the moths, particular interest attaches to the specifically moorland species. Typical of these is the small heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) which frequents hills and moors, and also rough grassland, railway banks and grassy lanes. This attractive little butterfly is most commonly seen in June, but may be met with any time from May to October. It has been suggested that the large heath (*Coenonympha tullia*) may occur on Exmoor, but this is almost certainly not so, as this insect is a distinctly northern species.

A butterfly which loves moorlands, downs and sea cliffs, and which certainly occurs on Exmoor, is the dark green fritillary (*Argynnis aglaia*). This insect is on the wing during late June, and all of July. It is a most attractive animal and a very good flier. The food plant of the caterpillar is the dog violet.

Of particular interest is the marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*), which, although reared on plants which are not moorland species (scabious, honeysuckle, plantains), and generally regarded as preferring damp and marshy ground, appears on Exmoor to prefer a life on open heath land. It flies during May and June.

Finally, the small copper (*Lycaena phlaens*) may be mentioned. This is not a specifically moorland species, being found in many different kinds of open places. The larvae feed on docks and sorrels. Adults may be seen flying on Exmoor between late April and September.

In assembling the material for this chapter I have had invaluable help from John Burton, John Coleman-Cooke, Alan Kennard, Ernest Neal and Nigel Tucker. Much that is useful derives from them —the mistakes are my own.

5

The Red Deer Herds

by JOHN COLEMAN-COOKE

THE red deer of Exmoor, now estimated at between 500 and 600 animals, comprise the finest herds of wild deer in England. They live all the year round in the woods and combes and on the open moors of the National Park. Small parties wander extensively and may be found anywhere between Bridgwater Bay and Barnstaple Bay, but the great majority remain remarkably faithful to the country which their ancestors have inhabited since early times.

The Exmoor deer are never obviously on show, and the visitor who expects to see them living under park conditions, where they can be easily watched, will be sadly disappointed. They are wild and elusive creatures. Deer watching calls for unlimited patience, a knowledge of how to move unobtrusively in wild country, and an understanding of the animal's habits.

Historically, the Exmoor deer are descendants of the wild deer that roamed prehistoric Britain when most of the lower land was forest and scrub. As the ancient woodlands were felled and the clearings colonised, the deer retreated into the hills, there to lead a precarious and modified existence. Fortunately, deer provide sweet meat which was highly prized especially in medieval times when fresh meat in the winter was almost unknown. In the Royal Forests the deer were rigorously protected by savage laws which, besides laying down severe penalties for poaching or even 'disturbance' of the King's deer, explained how the deer were to be looked after in severe weather . . .

> And when there is not sufficient food for the Deer neither of grass nor such fruits, then the foresters that have the charge of the wild beasts, must provide Browsewood to be cut down for them to feed upon;

so wrote Manwood, in the seventeenth century, in his classic, *Treatise of the Forest Laws.*

With the eventual reduction in the number of the Royal Forests the red deer might have disappeared altogether if they had not been afforded a degree of protection because of the sport they provided.

In Scotland it was deer stalking; on Exmoor and a few other places it was deer hunting. The hunting of deer causes much controversy in the national press, but it is only fair to say that as well as being a sport, it is an effective form of control largely because killing is selective and on account of the tolerance shown by farmers towards deer damage. It is an old saying on the moor that a farmer grows an extra acre or two of roots 'for the deer'.

The red deer deserve to be studied for what they are: the largest wild animals remaining in Britain. They are creatures of heraldic dignity, endowed with speed and grace. They are dynamic individuals, living in groups based on a highly developed social system.

The main deer areas on Exmoor, which support about nine herds, are centred on the woodlands that clothe the deep river valleys and the steep cliffs. But trees alone cannot supply deer with an adequate diet, and although much of their time is spent in the woods eating the leaves of the trees and browsing on the woodland plants, during the twelve months of the year they feed on almost all types of vegetation on the moor.

Exmoor deer are never artificially fed, yet even when the hills are covered by a mantle of snow they manage to keep fit by feeding on ivy and raiding farmland. They have been seen digging down into snow to tear up the roots of ferns, and standing on their hind legs on the top of high drifts to nibble at the branches of trees that are normally out of reach.

Unfortunately for the farmers they also raid farm crops, and a group can do severe damage in a single night to a field of roots. There are farmers in the National Park who see deer almost every day, but there are many people who never see a deer from one year's end to the next. Certainly roads, rivers or fences do not in themselves deter travelling deer, who will swim a river in spate, and dash across the road in front of the headlights of a car, or jump a seven-foot fence.

How can one equate such daring with the timidity for objects that are unfamiliar? A farmer will say that one way to stop deer entering a particular field is to keep the deer guessing. The deterrent may be a line of white tapes threaded through trees or along the top of a bank, or an ungutted rabbit slung on a post and left to go foul, or an unusual scarecrow, or gadgets that 'go bump in the night'. None of these efforts will deter deer for more than a few days, and once the novelty has worn off the deer will go through, and where deer go sheep will follow.

The herds are not distributed evenly over the moorlands. There are about nine main deer areas, each holding between twenty and a hundred deer. It is convenient to refer to these as herds, although the boundaries of the territories may be hard to define. Luckily for the breed the herds mix with one another at various seasons, and big stags in particular travel considerable distances in the mating season.

In winter, the coats of red deer are a variety of shades of brown and grey with the hairs of the pelage very long; this gives them a rather dull appearance. In summer, the hairs are short and the coats glisten in the sunlight. They are several shades nearer to red, with the thigh creamy-yellow, the muzzle grey, and the eyes large and amber.

For about ten months of the year, from November until late August, the stags and hinds live largely apart, forming separate male and female communities. The basic unit of the herd during this time is the family group composed of hinds and their followers. A group may include a yearling or two, some two-year-olds, several young hinds and the matriarchal hind who is invariably the leader. The numbers in the family groups may range from one hind and a yearling up to a dozen or more animals. The best time to observe these groups is in the spring when they leave the woods to feed on the sweet fresh grass on the hills.

During the nine or ten months in which the stags live apart from the hind groups, they are often within the same area and sometimes thay may be seen chewing the cud only a short distance away. Having no family responsibilities the stags wander in twos or threes, or often singly.

In early September the whole picture changes, although the exact time of the disturbance depends on whether the rut is early or late. With the approach of the rut the stags gather groups of hinds around them and fierce competition develops between those that have collected harems and unsatisfied bachelors on the prowl.

The challenge roared out by the stag is like the bellow of a cow, though far more eerie, but it has the more picturesque name of belling. Other stags take up the challenge and although fights to the death are rare events, the antlers become weapons of power when the head is bowed and a twenty-stone creature backs every thrust. The rattling of antlers at stag fights is a blood-curdling sound. During these fracas, it is well known that a young stag may nip in while the protagonists are engaged and quickly make off with a number of hinds. A big stag in the cream of condition will gather as many as fourteen hinds, and he may manage to retain them through most of the rutting period, but on an average a stag has no more than five or six.

By the end of the rut the stag is in poor condition. His coat is black and matted after many rollings in the liquid mud of a stag wallow. Wallows—or soiling pits as they are called locally—are rolling places close to a spring and after a few visits the black peat is churned into a morass of liquid mud. It is thought that stags wallow in the autumn to cool their bodies which are in a state of excitement and overheating. It may be too that there is a physiological effect in a coat of dark, drying mud which makes the beast look even more formidable. Hinds (and sometimes stags) use wallows in summer, but their purpose then is to ease the irritation caused by insects.

After the rut there follows the winter segregation. In the spring the hinds move into the areas where they drop their calves about June. These nursery places are usually thickets in deep valleys.

Although they are hard to locate amid the summer greenery, if one does happen upon a hind and her calf it is one of the most beautiful sights in nature.

The Exmoor stags cast their antlers every spring. A good set of antlers can sometimes be picked up in the rough combes or in the woods. One farmer has over several years found antlers always in the same spot near to his farm, and from a distinctive malformation he has established that the same stag chooses the same spot each spring in which to rid himself of the old head. On this same farm a hind comes regularly to a slope of bracken and hawthorns to have her calf. These two instances throw an interesting light on the conservatism of deer in the choice of ground for their natural functions.

It is a popular conception that a stag grows an extra point on each antler for every year of its life, but this has long ago been proved a fallacy, although there is a definite relationship between the age of the beast and its head. A young stag in his second year with his first head will show a head of two simple spikes, which in subsequent years develop into a full head usually when the beast is nine years of age. When first grown the antler is clean and bright, but the exposure to rain and sunlight, and wear through being constantly rubbed against trees and the ground, produce a brown or black colour with the ivory-like tips. The quality of the feeding largely determines the fineness of the head. Exmoor deer come somewhere between the poorer heads of the Highlands and the notable records achieved in deer parks where the animals are artificially fed.

It takes about four months to grow a new set of antlers, and during this time the growing bone is coated in velvet and the stag is most secret in its habits.

It is worth a visit to Exmoor in October to hear a stag belling; likely places are on the Porlock–Lynton road, or near Cloutsham. In the early spring, when the moor views are sharp and the deer are out in groups feeding on the new grass, the watcher has probably the best chance of seeing this noble animal in a wild setting.

6

Prehistoric, Roman, and Dark Age Monuments

by L. V. GRINSELL

THE earliest evidences of human settlement in the Exmoor region are Pleistocene animal remains and occasional Palaeolithic hand-axes from the Doniford and other river gravels between Minehead and St. Audrie's Bay, especially near the latter, but these localities are nearly all outside Exmoor proper. The Mesolithic Age is represented by microlithic sites well beyond the western limits of Exmoor, between Ilfracombe and Barnstaple, on Porlock Common and in the Quantock-Brendon Hills region to the east.

Neolithic settlement (roughly 3000–1800 B.C.), again, is almost confined to the periphery of Exmoor, there being virtually none on Exmoor proper. Long barrows are absent, with the doubtful exception of the possible burial chamber at Battlegore, Williton, between Exmoor and Quantock. Neolithic types of flint implements, axes and leaf-shaped arrowheads, are almost entirely absent from the moor, and the rare Neolithic leaf-arrowheads from Exmoor itself should be regarded as evidence of occasional hunting expeditions rather than permanent settlement. Stone axes have been recorded only from just over the western and southern fringes of the region, such as Barnstaple, Arlington, Langford Budville and Filleigh.

Present evidence suggests that Exmoor proper was not settled until the Beaker period and the Early Bronze Age (about 1800–1500 B.C.), and even then not very extensively. The Culbone beaker was found in a stone-lined grave, apparently not covered by a round barrow, between Oare and Porlock Hill in 1896. It is the only example known from the region, but two others came from Wick Barrow just east of the Quantock Hills. The fine stone cist in Langridge Wood (015373) south-west of Roadwater is however either of the Beaker period or the Early Bronze Age. Free-standing stone circles on Porlock Hill (845446), Almsworthy Common (843418) and Withypool Hill (836343) are probably of similar date. All three stone circles so far known on Exmoor were found after heath fires, and a search of parts of the moor following the burning of the heath early each year should lead to more archaeological discoveries.

It is likely that all the round barrows or burial-mounds on Exmoor belong to the Bronze Age, and the number is probably between 300 and 350. Some notable groups occur within the boundaries of the National Park. Chapman Barrows (695435) between Parracombe and Challacombe comprises eleven large bowl-shaped examples, and just to the east are Longstone Barrow, Wood Barrow, and others. The group known as the Five Barrows (733367), just west of the Devon–Somerset ridgeway and county boundary, contains at least nine examples, one of which is a bell-shaped barrow of a type especially common on Salisbury Plain. On the same ridgeway are Setta Barrow (725380) enclosed by a peristalith or retaining circle of stones, and Two Barrows (747362) south-east of Kinsford Gate, which are named from the two most conspicuous mounds of a group of four. Other fine groups are the Wam Barrows on Winsford Hill (876343), various barrows near Dunkery Beacon (875415, 901420), and the group east of Selworthy Beacon (925480). Of excavated examples, the most noteworthy for its contents is a round barrow on Beacon Hill, or Bampfylde Hill, North Molton (729316). In 1889 this barrow was opened and in it was discovered a cremated interment, probably female, accompanied by segmented blue faience beads of a type believed to have been imported from Egypt around 1400 B.C. Other beads were also found in this barrow, the finds from which are in the Exeter Museum.

To the Bronze Age can be attributed, with reasonable safety, a few standing stones of which the most conspicuous are the Long Stone (705431) east of Chapman Barrows, and the sole surviving member of the stone setting on Mattocks Down south of Combe Martin (601437), the rest of which was destroyed many years ago. Various settings usually of smaller stones, in rows, triangles, quadrilaterals, and other forms, were recorded many years ago by J. F. Chanter and R. Hansford Worth in the Devon portion of Exmoor. They are rare in other parts of Britain, and very little is known about their purpose and period, but they are most likely Bronze Age.

Implements and weapons of the Bronze Age are rather unusual on Exmoor, but an account of a fine perforated stone axe-hammer from Leeball Field near Challacombe has recently been published.

It is uncertain whether the very few hut-circles on Exmoor date from the Bronze Age or the Iron Age. They have not been scientifically excavated, and until they have been the most that can be done is to nterpret them in the light of what is known of those on Dartmoor, which are far more numerous and adequately investigated. A group in the Valley of the Rocks, west of Lynton (706496), looks convincing and is best seen after heath fires. Most of the sites marked hut-circles between Lynton and the Chains (almost the only part of Exmoor where they occur at all) seem doubtful, and some of them are in fact the retaining walls of round barrows. There was probably formerly a group of hut-circles enclosed in a pound on the hill-slope between Withycombe Beacon and Dumbledeer Farm (004410), and it is possible that it may still be visible under appropriate vegetational conditions.

During the Iron Age (roughly from 500 B.C. to A.D. 43), a cooler and wetter climate may well have restricted the extent of human settlement on Exmoor. The region was in the territory of the tribe known as the Dumnonii, who occupied the whole of Cornwall and Devon as well as western Somerset. Less is known about them than of most of the other Iron Age tribes of southern England, mainly because they differed from them in having no coinage. Almost the only visible surviving monuments of the period are the hill-forts. Most are distributed around the fringe of the moor, but some occur in the heart of Exmoor on hill-spurs overlooking rivers, such as Cow Castle (795374) above the River Barle; Road Castle (863376) near Exford above the River Exe; and Staddon Hill Camp (882377) above its tributary the Larcombe Brook. Perhaps the finest is Shoulsbarrow Castle (706391) in a commanding position south-east of Challacombe on the western edge of Exmoor. It has a double rampart on all sides excepting the south-west where it is defended by a steep slope; it covers nearly ten acres, being probably larger than any other hill-fort within the National Park boundary. Elworthy Barrows, a hill-fort just outside the eastern boundary, is a single ramparted example of about the same acreage, perhaps unfinished, and with an inturned entrance at the east. Bury Castle (917472) has two ramparts on the west side, the only side not protected by an escarpment, and one elsewhere. Bat's Castle (988422) in Dunster Park has a curious out-turned entrance which has the appearance of being an original feature. Not far from it are linear ditches which may be outer defences. On Gallox Hill (984426) to the north-west is one of several hillslope-forts on Exmoor. On Exmoor the division between hill-forts and hillslope-forts is not clear-cut, because of some examples which, although between hilltops and valleys, are on low but fairly level spurs. Of such a type is the beautiful little example known as Road Castle (863376) south-east of Exford. No scientific excavation has been done at any of the Exmoor hill-forts, and scarcely any chance finds have been recorded from them.

The only important linear defensive earthwork on Exmoor is on Wind Hill between Lynmouth and Countisbury (740495). It is a magnificent rampart with deep ditch on the east side—the direction from which attack was anticipated by its builders. It extends from the cliffs of Lynmouth Bay to the precipitous slopes of Chisel Combe which fall steeply into the valley of the East Lyn river. It appears to have the essential characteristics of an invasion beach head, constructed by some tribe who must have landed at the mouth of the River Lyn and consolidated their position on Wind Hill; but whether this tribe performed its task in the Iron Age or the Dark Ages will not be known until a scientific excavation has been undertaken on the site, and perhaps not even then.

Occupation of the Exmoor region during the Roman period (roughly A.D. 43–410) was slight. Field antiquities, as far as is known, include two Roman fortlets; the first, known as Old Barrow (788494), just west of County Gate, was built about A.D. 48 and abandoned around 51; the second, known as the Beacon (664493), on the edge of the cliff north-west of Martinhoe, was built about 58 and abandoned around 75. To the south-east of Exmoor National Park, between Wiveliscombe and Taunton, are several Roman sites, including a small fort at Nunnington Park near Wiveliscombe. At least three Roman coin hoards have been found in the vicinity of King's Castle Iron Age hill-fort nearby. There is no doubt of the existence of iron-workings of the Roman period near Dulverton and probably elsewhere: the proof is enshrined in two specimens of iron-working refuse, in which Roman coins and oyster-shells are embedded, now in the Bristol City Museum. They were found somewhere near Dulverton but it is unfortunate that the site is not more precisely known.

Exmoor is fortunate in having within its borders records of several inscribed stones usually attributed to the Dark Ages, probably between A.D. 450 and 650. Of these the best known is the Caratacus Stone (890335) on Winsford Hill. As the inscription is not quite complete, it is uncertain whether it reads CARATACI NEPUS or CARANACI NEPUS (kinsman of Caratacus or Caranacus). Inscribed stones of similar date have been recorded from Holwell near Parracombe, and Lynton Common; the latter is now in the garden of Six Acres Farm, Lynton. The Tigernus Stone on Lundy is of the same period, and other inscribed stones have recently been found on Lundy.

Of Norman and medieval defensive earthworks, the finest within the National Park is Holwell Castle (670446) near Parracombe: a magnificent example of motte and bailey earthwork, under grass, and very photogenic. Another good example is Bury Castle (938270) east of Dulverton, situated on a wooded hill-spur between the Rivers Exe and Haddeo, and best seen in the spring during the bluebell season. Bampton Castle (959225), just south of Exmoor, is similar.

The distribution of barrows along the course of the ridgeway forming the boundary between Devon and Somerset suggests that it has been in use since the Early Bronze Age, particularly the stretch between Mole's Chamber (718393) and Sandyway Cross (792332), which must rank among the finest walks in Britain. The ridgeway between Lynmouth and Porlock may also be of considerable antiquity, as suggested by the barrows along its course, and by the earthwork on Wind Hill, constructed to guard an approach from the east and therefore implying the existence of a definite and well-known route. The ridgeway along the Brendon Hills, studded with round barrows, and followed for almost the whole of its course by parish boundaries, could well date from the Early Bronze Age.

That rivers were an important means of communication, at any rate from the Iron Age onwards, is shown by the frequency with which hill-forts are sited near them.

Finally, there is the difficult question of the antiquity of Tarr Steps, built in a primitive manner, and rebuilt in similar style more than once this century, after being damaged or even washed away by periodical floods. It seems impossible to prove an early date for the first bridge on the site. It has been stated that ridgeways, assumed Bronze Age by reason of barrows along their course, converge upon Tarr Steps; but a glance at the maps does not show this in any very convincing manner. It may be added that the dating evidence for the clapper bridges of Dartmoor is equally unconvincing. After stating that fords and stepping stones preceded bridges, the late R. Hansford Worth expressed the opinion that none of the Dartmoor clapper bridges was likely to be earlier than A.D. 1400. The prehistoric origin of Tarr Steps may likewise be no more than a pious wish.

CLASSIFIED LIST
OF
THE MOST IMPORTANT ANCIENT SITES

STONE CIRCLES

Almsworthy Common	843418
Porlock Common	845446
Withypool Hill	836343

ROUND BARROWS

Alderman's Barrow	837423	Robin How and Joaney How	907427
Anstey Barrow	874286	Rowbarrows	876415
Bampfylde Hill	729316	Selworthy Beacon (E. of)	925480
Berry Down	567436	Setta Barrow	725380

Bendels Barrows	854410	Twitchen Barrows	804323
Brightworthy Barrows	817351	Two Barrows	747362
Chains Barrow	735419	Wam Barrows	876343
Chapman Barrows	695435	West Anstey Barrows	854291
Five Barrows	733367	Wood Barrow	717425
North Molton Beacon	779325		

STONE CIST

Langridge Wood	015373

STANDING STONES AND STONE SETTINGS

Dun's Stone	018330	(standing stone, shown on some maps as remnant of stone circle)
Furzehill Common	736440	(parallelogram with triangle, and quadlateral with triangle)
Long Stone, Challacombe	705431	(standing stone nine feet high, probably the highest on Exmoor)
Mattocks Down	601437	(standing stone near site of important though now destroyed stone row)
Oare (Manor Allotment)	803433	(short stone row)

HUT-CIRCLES

Valley of the Rocks	706496	
Dumbledeer Farm	004410	(visible only rarely)

HILL-FORTS

Bat's Castle (Dunster)	988422	Mounsey Castle	886295
Brewers Castle	883298	Norton Camp	195263
Bury Castle (Selworthy)	917472	Road Castle	863376
Cow Castle	759374	Roborough Castle	731460
Elworthy Barrows	070337	Shoulsbarrow Castle	706391
King's Castle (Wiveliscombe)	097282	Stock Castle	718469
Mockham Down	667358		

HILLSLOPE-FORTS

Gallox Hill (Dunster)	984426	Staddon Hill	882377
Smay's Wood	630360	Sweetworthy (Dunkery)	890425

LINEAR DEFENSIVE EARTHWORKS (all periods from Iron Age onwards)

Grabbist Hill (Dunster)	983437	(probably medieval)
Heydon Hill	034282	
Wind Hill (E. of Lynmouth)	740495	

ROMAN FORTLETS

Martinhoe	664493
Old Barrow (County Gate)	788494

ROMAN SIEGE FORT (?)

Nunnington Park (Wiveliscombe)	090270

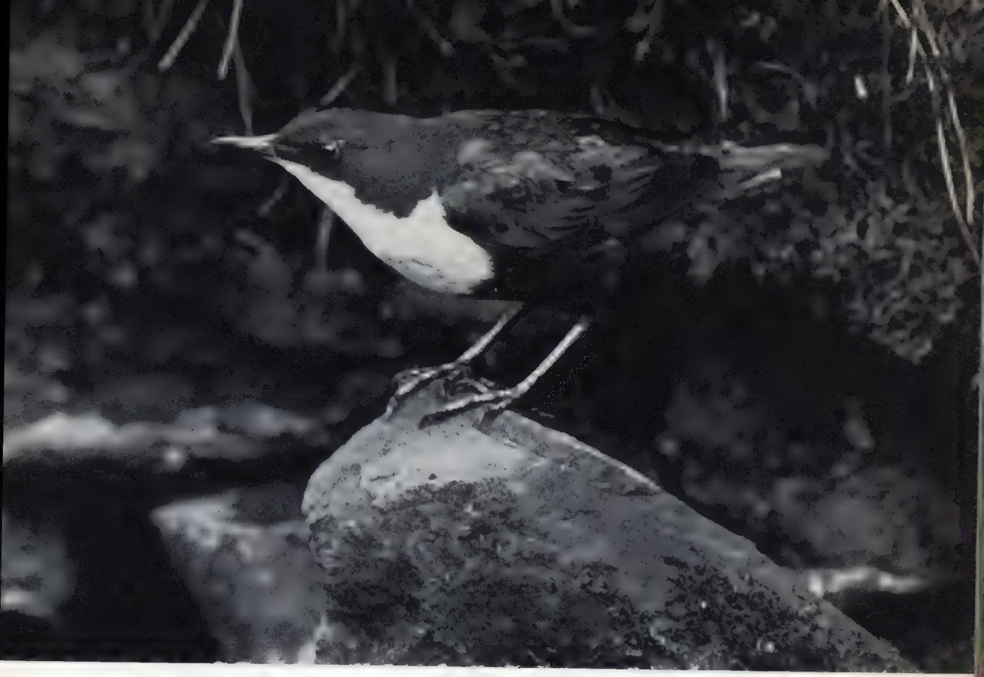


PLATE X. A dipper waits to capture food in an Exmoor stream. These birds are resident on all rivers in the Park, up to the heads of tributaries at 1,200 feet

PLATE XI. Blackcock displaying at a "lek". Social fighting between the males takes place in March–April at display grounds used year after year

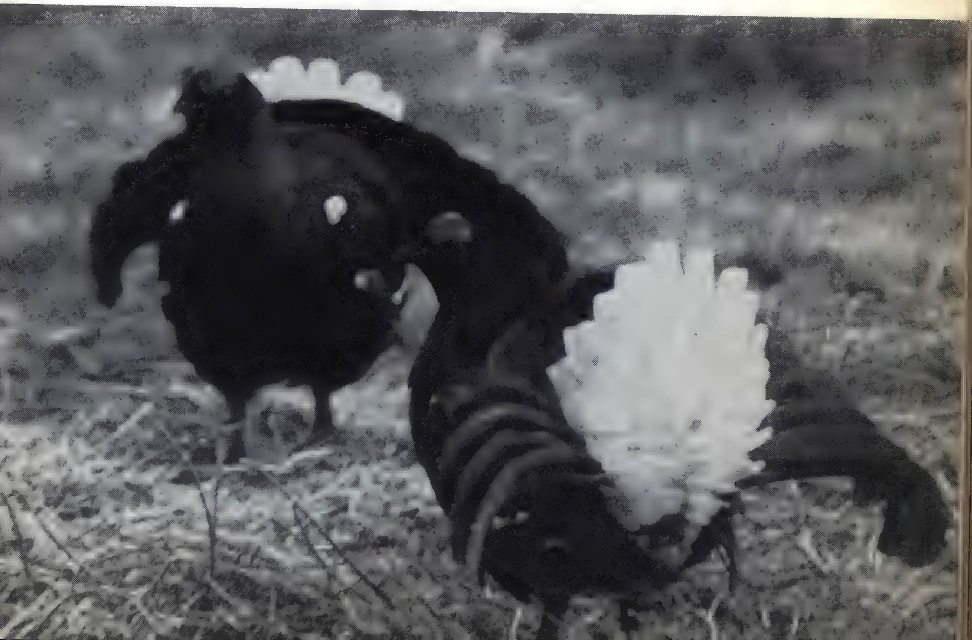


PLATE XII. Young stags of 4 or 5 years with horns fully developed but still covered with "velvet", which protects the growing antlers and peels off in late August

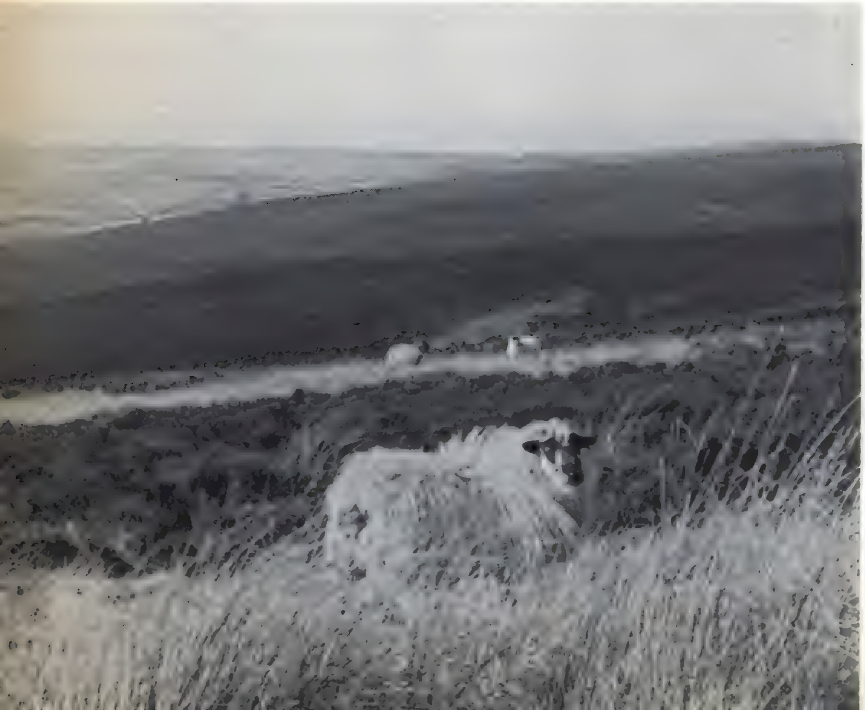
PLATE XIII. Mature stags in autumn—the centre one carrying a fine head of 12 points is presumably the oldest

PLATE XIV. Red deer stag in the rutting time caught by the camera on Robin How

PLATE XV. Red deer hinds

PLATE XVI. Exmoor ponies on their native hills

PLATE XVII. Scottish Blackface ewes on open moorland. The picture illustrates the diversity of vegetation, with rushes in the foreground, old heather immediately behind the single sheep, succeeded by a strip of grass and bracken, and the hillsides in the background covered with younger heather showing the 'swaling' (burning) line



DARK AGE INSCRIBED STONE

Caratacus Stone	890335

NORMAN AND MEDIEVAL MOTTES

Bampton	959225	Castle Roborough	620377
Bratton Fleming	645378	Holwell Castle	670446
Bury Castle (E. of Dulverton)	938270		

MISCELLANEOUS

Tarr Steps	868321

7

The Settlement Pattern of the Exmoor Villages

by A. E. FREY

EXMOOR has always been a relatively poor and isolated area with a tendency towards extremes in its environment, strongly reflected in the patterns and forms of settlement, and ways of life.

In the period following the progressive evacuation of the Romans from Britain, Exmoor continued to sustain a relatively sparse Celtic population, which occupied the upland periphery of the moor and the moorland valleys. Modern opinion is in favour of a rapid Saxon occupation of Somerset and Devon following the defeat of the Britons (Celts) at Penselwood, on the Somerset–Wiltshire border, in A.D. 658, which forced the British kingdom of the Dumnonii to contract westwards, and open up first eastern and, after 682, western Exmoor to largely peaceful Saxon infiltration and settlement. The Saxons no doubt took over a few of the mainly pastoral Celtic farms which they found on the moorland margin, but they were more interested in the lower wooded ground neglected by the Celts, and here founded many farms and large nucleated villages like Combe Martin, Pilton, North Molton, Porlock, Minehead, etc. Celtic survivals like Charles, Landkey and Wallover on south-west Exmoor provide examples of British settlements which must have been numerous around the moorland edge. By the third quarter of the eighth century the men who looked to Somerton for government formed the shire of Somerset, and those later settlers who looked to Exeter became Devonians, the barren waste of the high moor forming an undisputed boundary zone between them.

By the middle of the tenth century these shires had been subdivided into hundreds for administrative purposes, and already by 1086 some amalgamation of hundreds into more efficient units had taken place, the hundreds of North Molton, Molland, Minehead and Cutcombe having disappeared in the process.

After A.D. 835 sporadic Viking raids on the English coasts became increasingly frequent. The spectacular cliffs by which Exmoor descends to the sea hardly encouraged a sea-shore settlement and the Danish raids up the Bristol Channel emphasized the advantages of a cliff-top site. The battle of Arx Cynuit in A.D. 878 (the earthwork on

Wind Hill just west of Countisbury) demonstrated that a constant coastal watch could lead to the rapid concentration of a substantial Saxon force from the surrounding Exmoor settlements. With height and topography on their side, the king's thegns under Odda won a resounding victory and prevented the outflanking of Alfred the Wessex king, then busy regrouping his forces in the Somerset Levels. Alfred's ensuing significant defeat of the main Danish army in north Wiltshire later in the same year secured Wessex (including Exmoor), alone of all the Saxon kingdoms, from Danish control and settlement.

The Domesday Book of 1086 gives evidence of the settlement pattern at the end of the Saxon period, of the Norman manorial system, and also some information on animal husbandry. It does not however give acreages, except indirectly, and since it is concerned mainly with tenure and taxable possessions it does not list villages or individual farms. A map showing the distribution of Saxon vills (villages) would demonstrate how largely the basis of present-day rural settlement around Exmoor already existed in 1086, and the record would probably be even more impressive if the many small and isolated farmsteads (often going back to Celtic times and beyond) characteristic of the upland margin had been separately listed. Farming was surprisingly intensive on good and poor soils alike, and Domesday lists several small pastoral settlements above 1,100 feet in areas which are now above the upper limit of economic farming, for example, Radworthy at the head of the River Bray which went out of cultivation in the nineteenth century; Lank Combe just west of Badgworthy Water, Bicheordin (Badgworthy?) in what is now called the Doone Valley, and Estandona just south of Woolhanger, which were all abandoned soon after Domesday. Stone, just east of Exford, is however still farmed.

The pattern of ownership of groups of Domesday manors is revealing and shows a strong relationship to the relief of Exmoor. The Bishop of Coutances was lord of many manors on the western side of Exmoor, manors which increased in prosperity and size with decrease of height. On the north-west, in the area between high Exmoor and the coast from Lynton to Countisbury, were the holdings of the two brothers William Capra and Ralf de Pomaria, remarkable for the large numbers of animals kept in an exposed, high and dissected area which today is not intensively farmed. The large numbers of sheep, wild horses, swine, goats and cattle indicate an area of highly concentrated and efficient animal husbandry. Roger de Courcelle's manors penetrate deeply into the eastern side of the moor, but only in the valleys of the Exe and Barle, where a good deal of prosperous upland settlement exists today. Surprisingly his manors were all small and maintained few animals in an area which is today pre-eminently grazing country. Ralf de Limesi owned a small group of moderately prosperous manors on the edge of Porlock Vale in an area which is now high-quality farming land. William de Mohun with his castle at Dunster monopolised the drainage basin of the Rivers Avill and upper Washford, and the coastal lowlands between Minehead and Dunster. He thus tapped large acreages of water meadow which produced hay for winter feed in a fertile area, so that most of his manors were larger than average with more animals.

On the south flank of Exmoor the large royal manors of North Molton, Molland, Dulverton, Brompton Regis and Winsford had been founded on nucleated Saxon villages, and no doubt kept large numbers of animals and possessed subsidiary farms. Later they gave rise to large parishes with important townships.

Not only is the ownership pattern closely related to the geography of Exmoor but also the siting of manors and parishes which emerged later. On the upland the characteristic site for buildings was at the heads of minor river valleys, or high on the valley sides above the main rivers, to avoid the violence of flooding on the floors of the main valleys, and to be closer to the summit routeways, the only practicable way of moving about on Exmoor. The few exceptions to this almost universal pattern were the fording places such as Withypool, Exford and Winsford, where the trackways crossed the main rivers. On lower ground, the typical manor house and village site was at the junction between the uplands of Devonian rock and the lowlands of Triassic and Jurassic rocks. This typical 'break of slope' site, usually on or near a stream, tapped two kinds of environment and avoided the dampness and liability to flood of the flat-floored vales. The parishes are arranged to include some of the high moor grazing, some of the more fertile middle slopes, and some of the prized land in the valley floor. To the east the watershed of the Brendon Hills provides a common frontier for half-a-dozen similarly disposed parishes. Finally, with farms as with parishes, the closer to the high moor they lay the larger the territory they covered as the land deteriorated in quality.

Although the wealth of Exmoor in the Domesday survey when compared with the rest of Devon and Somerset was low, this should not mask the fact that Exmoor was surprisingly widely settled; in fact the next two centuries saw the virtual completion of the present settlement pattern. By 1350, when the Black Death put an end to further colonisation, large numbers of free peasants had occupied most of the usable land. They enclosed as they reclaimed, adding to the already large acreages of long-enclosed land farmed in severalty (independent ownership), so that by the fourteenth century little except the moor was left unenclosed.

The great exception to the process of enclosure was the royal forest, accepted *de facto* as the king's demesne in Saxon times and *de jure* under the Normans. The term forest referred in the legal sense to an area reserved as a royal hunting preserve and subject to forest law, and not necessarily to woodland: indeed the forest had so little timber that the presence of single trees was enough for them to be named individually and used as boundary markers, for example, Hoar Oak and Kite Oak (=Kittuck now Culbone). After the deforestation of Devon in 1204 the royal forest probably lay entirely in Somerset, but its eastern boundary fluctuated widely, advancing eastwards to the line of the Exe by the reign of John, retreating under Henry III and Edward I and becoming stabilised at the line of perambulation made in 1301, i.e. the present parish of Exmoor plus the parish of Oare. Although the king's land was thus delimited, the forest law applied to a larger area which included the commons of many of the bordering manors. The harshness of the early forest laws and the fact that the king's deer took heavy toll of the cultivated land, was a frequent source of grievance, although by the fourteenth century the enforcement of forest law had been considerably relaxed. The bordering manors however maintained their ancient privileges on the forest:

(1) The Free Suitors—37 tenement holders in Withypool and 15 in Hawkridge, now the south half of Withypool parish, whose main right was to daytime pasturage for certain numbers of animals, in return for certain duties which included attending the forest court (Swainmote), rounding up animals on the forest, and perambulating the bounds.

(2) The Suitors at Large—the tithingmen and the 63 owners of land around the forest who also attended the Swainmote. Later the custom evolved that they depastured their animals for half the rate paid by strangers, the depredations of the deer being quoted as one of the reasons for the privilege.

John Leland, in his account of a journey from Dunster to Barnstaple, recorded: 'The residew (3 or 4 miles) of the way to Exford was partely on a moore and sumwhat barren of Corne and partely hilly'. 'From Exford to Simonsbath Bridge a 4 miles, al by Forest, Baren, and Morisch Ground, wher ys store and breading of young Catelle, but little or no Corne or Habitation'. 'From Simonsbath Bridge (of woode) I rode up a high Morisch Hylle, and so passing by 2 myles in lyke ground, the soyle began to be somewhat fruteful, and the Hills to be ful of Enclosures, ontylle I cam a 3 miles farther to a poore Village caullid Brayforde'.

In 1652 under the Commonwealth, the forest was bought by James Boevey (see p. 65), who hoped by the injection of capital into Exmoor to convert it into a productive estate with tenant farmers. As already mentioned on page 5, Boevey built himself at Simonsbath a forester's lodge and enclosed some acres on a site both higher and deeper into the moor than any other settlement. We learn from one of his unsuccessful lawsuits (litigation was his main preoccupation) that the bordering commons were extensively used for the growing of corn, especially rye, in temporary enclosures, as well as for animal pasture.

The Attorney General's opinion of the forest in 1690 that ". . . it is a Chase, which is esteemed rather a thing of pleasure than profit . . . and what profits may arise upon this mountainous, barren and Boggy Ground are casuall and uncertaine" was written when Exmoor was a vast sheep run. In 1736 actual numbers of animals depastured were 37,416 sheep (13,941 from bordering manors, 16,195 from strangers and 7,280 from the free suitors), 127 bullocks and 102 colts.

The final enclosure of the forest and the purchase of the major part of it by John Knight took place in 1819. (See Chapter 9.).

Modern roads across the moor replaced the trackways and bridle paths which, since early time, had been the only lines of communication across Exmoor. As a result it is possible today to enjoy magnificent panoramas from these quiet yet remarkably straight summit roads. Away from the moor and the Brendon Hills the roads resume their winding, narrow and entrenched courses so typical of the West Country. An exception to these summit routes is the turnpike created in the late eighteen-twenties from Dulverton to Dunster, which faithfully follows the meanders of the Exe, Quarme and Avill to achieve a valley route through Exmoor.

The coastal road (A39), well known for its bends and gradients, was not used by motor coaches until brakes and traction were able to match the long 1 in 4 gradients of Porlock and Countisbury Hills, and it was as late as 1920 that the last stage-coach ran from Lynton to Minehead.

The railways were built in the area in the late nineteenth century. Minehead was linked to Taunton in 1874 to attract and cater for the tourist traffic, reinforcing a link between east Exmoor and Taunton which had long existed. This assured Minehead of rapid growth to maintain a leading position in its historic function as a port.

The diminutive Lynton and Barnstaple railway which opened in 1898 tried to do the same for western Exmoor, and until 1935 when it was forced to close, its quaint little carriages brought a large proportion of the 5,000 summer tourists who visited Lynton. The remains of its cuttings and embankments are a visible reminder of the revolution brought about by bus services and coach tours after 1918.

The Devon and Somerset railway opened in 1873, connecting Taunton with Barnstaple along the southern flank of Exmoor. To run through such hilly country it was winding and full of gradients and therefore very difficult to engineer. The topography was such that, after leaving Wiveliscombe, the railway could not approach closer than one mile to any of the market towns along the line.

Two main lodes of iron ore traverse Exmoor in a general east to west direction along the Brendon Hills crest to Burcombe and Horcombe, just south-west of Simonsbath. Except on the Brendon Hills where vertical shafts were driven, miners took advantage of the deep-cut valleys to drive in horizontal shafts to tap the ore. The haulage ways used to transport the iron up to the nearest summit road can be seen at Halsgrove Farm (844367), Wheal Eliza (½ mile south-east of Simonsbath), Honeywell Farm (916373), and 1½ miles east of Pickedstones Farm. There is some evidence that the ore was mined by Germans invited here by Elizabeth I, but the main spate of activity began in 1850 (see page 81). Although smaller quantities of ore were recovered from Exmoor proper, South Wales iron companies directed their main attention to the Brendon Hills. Typical of the transport difficulties of the time was the necessity to construct the West Somerset Mineral Railway in two sections, the first running eastwards along the Brendon Hills crest from Goosemoor Station (958355) to Raleigh's Cross Station (023344), connecting a number of mines and processing plants whose remains may still be seen. The second section ran down the valley of the Washford River to Watchet and was connected to the first section by a 1 in 4 incline to negotiate the steep Brendon Hill flank. Between 1851 and 1883, when mining was abandoned, three-quarters of a million tons of ore were raised. An attempt in the first decade of the present century to reopen the mines proved a failure. The enterprise was defeated by three main difficulties: that of transport, the capricious and intermittent occurrence of the ore, and the need for constant pumping in this high rainfall area. The village which was built at the top of the incline to house the 400 or so miners is now a scarcely visible ruin, although the chapel remains.

Mines for iron, silver, lead and copper at Combe Martin and North Molton also ceased working towards the end of the nineteenth century.

The rapid growth of the tourist trade in the nineteenth century brought expansion to the coastal settlements, Watchet, Porlock, and especially Minehead, which became seaside resorts and emphazised the accessibility of the north-east of Exmoor. Towns thus far sustained by their activity as fishing and trading ports now grew rapidly to accommodate large numbers of tourists. Lynton and Lynmouth were linked by a cliff railway in 1890; Combe Martin (probably one of the longest villages in England) prospered, but Ilfracombe and Minehead collected the lion's share of the trade.

In recent years the popularity of inland holidays, resulting from the enormous growth of private car ownership, has led to the expansion of tourism in such places as Dulverton, Exford and Parracombe, convenient centres from which to enjoy Exmoor. In addition to its hotels Exford is the headquarters of hunting on Exmoor. Finally, a feature of recent years has been the influx of capital into Exmoor, brought by retired people, and also by heavy investment by businessmen in farming and the resultant extension of improved husbandry. The reclamation carried out by the Honeymead group of farms is a striking example of this trend.

Apart, however, from the stimulation to growth afforded by the tourist industry which rescued some market towns and villages on main routes, the remaining settlements show a gentle but steady decline. A flourishing medieval woollen industry in such centres as Dunster and North Molton declined and died by 1830 leaving the Yarn Market (built 1609) in Dunster as a reminder of the west Somerset kersey cloth known as 'Dunsters'. Very many small villages have altered little over the centuries, especially those isolated on minor roads in the deep-cut valleys around Exmoor, and it is here that the true qualities of rural settlement can still be appreciated.

8

Exmoor of the Doones

by S. H. BURTON

EVERY year thousands of visitors to Exmoor look for the Doone Valley. Some find it; but many more stroll a mile or so up Badgworthy and then return, convinced that they have made the conventional pilgrimage to Exmoor's most celebrated shrine. Both the successful and the unsuccessful explorers have one thing in common —an interest in R. D. Blackmore's famous novel. Conversation with these sightseers soon reveals a further fact; their belief that everything in the novel is true. Reacting strongly to this credulity, many people who know something of the moor and of Blackmore rush to the other extreme and stoutly maintain that the Doones were invented by the novelist, and that nothing on Exmoor can possibly be described as having authentic Doone associations.

The whole subject has become so involved that it is not at all easy to sort out fact from fiction; but we can start with two certain facts: first, that neither of the extreme points of view just mentioned has anything whatever to recommend it; second, that whether the Doones themselves had historical existence or not, Blackmore most certainly did not invent the Doone *legends*. The novelist, as was his right, used the material as he thought fit, cutting, altering and embroidering to suit the needs of his story; but the Doone legends were known on the moor long before Blackmore began to write the novel.

Lorna Doone was published in 1869, and the book was composed during 1867 and the first four months of 1868. That Blackmore was drawing upon a collection of Doone stories widely circulated and long believed, is proved by the following evidence. Thomas Henry Cooper's *Guide to Lynton*, published in 1853, contains references to the Doone legends. In the following year *Legends of the West Country* appeared. This is what it says about the Doones:

> The Doones of Badgworthy were a gang of bloodthirsty robbers who haunted. . . . Exmoor about the reign of Charles I, and ravaged the whole country around. Many tales are still extant of their daring and ferocity.

George Tugwell published in *Fraser's Magazine* for October 1857 an article entitled 'Wanderings on Exmoor', in which he referred to the

Doones of Badgworthy; while Billing's *Directory and Gazetteer of the County of Devon*, also published in 1857, had the following entry:

> Brendon: the district abounds in legends about robbers called 'The Doones of Badgworthy'.

This is only a sample of the evidence that proves that the Doones were established in print as early as 1853. In addition, there is some evidence of a previous oral tradition. Two Exmoor clergymen, the Rev. J. F. Chanter and the Rev. W. H. Thornton, each added their weight to the pre-Blackmore Doone stories. Chanter, a local antiquarian of great repute, told of a manuscript collection of Doone legends which had been current in the Lynton area in the 1790s. The manuscript, which belonged to his father, was dated 1842. Thornton, then Vicar of Countisbury, was shown the famous long gun of Yenworthy in 1848, and was told the story of how it repulsed a Doone raid.

Blackmore himself scoffed at the notion that he had invented the Doone stories. When a correspondent sent him some Doone material in 1894, the novelist replied:

> I am pleased with your little fact, and should like to send it on to the man who lately proved—to his own good pleasure—that there never were any Doones, except in my imagination.

His own account of the origins of the book makes it clear that he had full faith in the legends and that he meant what he said when in a footnote to the text he stated, 'this vile deed was done beyond all doubt', and in the preface claimed that 'any son of Exmoor chancing on this volume, cannot fail to bring to mind the nurse-tales of his childhood'. Some of the material, he said, came from his grandfather, who was Rector of Oare in 1790; some came from a story called 'The Doones of Exmoor', published in *The Leisure Hour* in 1863; some came from his eager questioning of Exmoor folk when he was a boy, and again in the sixties when he was at Withypool, Charles and Oare, and spent much time talking to Mrs. Edith Ridler at Porlock, 'asking all she knew and had heard of the Doones, and putting it down in a notebook'.

In the face of all this, it is impossible to deny that the Doone legends were in existence before *Lorna Doone* was published. Even Edwin J. Rawle, author of the celebrated *Annals of the Ancient Forest of Exmoor*, though sceptical about the existence of the outlaws themselves, resented the charge that he had tried to prove that Blackmore invented the Doone traditions.

The story told by the Doone legends can be summarised very briefly. In or about the year 1620 a band of desperate men settled on Exmoor, taking possession of the old Badgworthy cots. They established a reign of terror over the moor, raiding the farms on the Forest fringes and robbing travellers on the roads and the moorland tracks. They abducted women from the villages and were responsible for several murders. At last, after a particularly vile outrage, which probably took place at Exford, the moorfolk rose against them, expelling the cut-throats from their stronghold in about 1690. The few survivors fled, none knows where.

Those are the dry bones of the Doone story. Particular legends add particular details, and Blackmore, of course, gave to the traditions a new shape and purpose by setting John and Lorna at the heart of the story. But vague though the original tales are about dates and places and about the origins of the Doones, they are all specific enough in stressing the brutality of the outlaws. One account of their arrival on the moor—repeated in 1908 to H. Snowden Ward, when he was collecting material for the 'Dooneland' edition of the novel—tells how, on the very night that they 'comed in over', they seized a house and turned an old farmer and 'his little maid' out into the snow. The next morning both were found dead, 'one under a withy bush, and the other somewhere else'. A macabre twist marks many of the stories. One tale, repeated with several variations, describes a Doone raid on a lonely farmhouse. The master of the house was away, and the terrified wife hid herself. The raiders caught the child and stabbed her, saying 'Prick the calf and the cow will mooee!' At this, the distraught mother emerged from her hiding-place and told the Doones where to find such money and valuables as the house contained, hoping thereby to obtain mercy. Having possessed themselves of the spoil, the thieves murdered the woman and her daughter before making off.

Another story concerns the murder of a child whose mother they abducted. A maidservant, who had hidden herself and so escaped, described how the killers laughed and joked over their dying victim, chanting the hideous doggerel that is, perhaps, the most vivid evidence of the callous brutality that all the legends attribute to the Doones:

> Child, if they ask who killed thee,
> Say 'twas the Doones of Badgworthy.

Speculation about the origins of the Doones has taken many strange turns, and the most improbable theories can be readily dismissed. It has been suggested, for example, that Doone is a corruption of Dane, and that the Doone legends enshrine folk-memories of the exploits of those spectacular and undoubtedly historical disturbers of the peace. Since almost all the Doone stories have an inland setting, and since the details are undeniably of seventeenth-century origin, there is no case to be made for identifying them with the Danish pirates who attacked Watchet and Porlock in the tenth century, but who did not penetrate beyond the coastal fringe.

Legends of the West Country put forward the theory that they were dispossessed cavaliers, but this notion assigns too late a date to the beginning of the Doones' career on the moor. Nor will the idea that they were Sedgemoor refugees stand up to close inspection. The Doone stories describe the outlaws as living on Exmoor for a long time, and as hated and feared from the start. Neither of these conditions would apply to Monmouth's men.

The most persistent 'explanation' and in some ways the most plausible, assigns a Scottish origin to the gang. Blackmore himself speaks of a dispute about 'great estates in the north country' as the cause of Sir Ensor Doone's embittered withdrawal to 'some outlandish part, where none could be found to know him', but he is deliberately vague about the pre-Exmoor history of the robbers. He would, most probably, have been at once astonished and delighted could he have read the very full account of the Doone family that appeared in the *West Somerset Free Press* in 1901.[1] The article was written by Ida M. Browne, under the name of 'Audrie Doon', who claimed that the ancient Scottish family from which she was descended had a tradition of a migration to Exmoor in the seventeenth century.

Briefly re-told, the story states that in 1618 the then head of the family, Sir James Ensor Doone, laid claim to the estates of the Earl of Moray. The Earl imprisoned Sir Ensor, who sought redress at Court. His cause was ignored and he was exiled from Scotland. Always of a proud and vindictive nature, he was now obsessed by a sense of injustice, and, together with his wife and a servant named Beeton, he withdrew from the world. The trio settled, so 'Audrie Doon' claimed, in the East Lyn valley. Sons were born to the Doones in their exile, and the family maintained itself by raiding the countryside. Eventually, a descendant of the Earl of Moray offered reparation to the Doones, and they withdrew from Exmoor in 1699.

'Audrie Doon' supported her story by referring to family relics which included a picture of Sir Ensor and a pistol engraved with the

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[1] A full discussion of this and many other Doone matters appears in L. B. Thornycroft's *The Story of the Doones in Fact, Fiction and Photo.*

Insert

name C. Doone and the date 1681. She also quoted from a journal kept by Rupert Doone, who visited Exmoor in 1747, and who meditated on 'the doings of our family when here, which I gather were not peaceable'.

No thorough investigation of these relics was ever made, for they were destroyed by fire soon afterwards; and no positive evidence has been found to corroborate 'Audrie Doon's' account of Sir Ensor's downfall. The story must be classed as an intriguing addition to the Doone legends.

We are left, then, with nothing reliable to account for the presence of the Doones on Exmoor; but in view of the undoubted fact that the Doone legends long preceded Blackmore, that they all point to the Badgworthy settlement as the robbers' home, and that they agree in dating the Doone exploits as seventeenth-century, it is necessary to look as closely as may be at the Exmoor of that period to see whether such stories are quite as improbable as they sound.

In the first place we should try to picture the howling wilderness of 'pre-Knight' Exmoor. There were no roads across the Forest, and but one house within its boundary. The farms that we see today did not exist, and the seventeenth-century landscape was no doubt accurately described by the Parliamentary Commissioners in 1651 as:

> . . . a Mountenous and cold ground much be Clouded with thick Foggs and Mists . . . overgrown with heath, and yielding but a pore kind of turf . . .

Such a lonely, barren land would offer an excellent retreat for men who wished to hide themselves and, since there were settlements and farms all round the fringes of the forest, Brendon, Oare, Challacombe, Exford, and since herds of sheep and cattle were pastured in the Forest between round-up times, determined ruffians could have supported themselves with little risk of capture. In the seventeenth century Exmoor was an extra-parochial wasteland. The only source of law and order was the Forest Warden or his Deputy at Simonsbath, and he could not be everywhere at once. If highwaymen could dominate the roads near London, then the Doones might well have prospered on the moor, with mutton for the taking and lonely hamlets to be plundered.

The Badgworthy cots were waiting for them too, when they 'comed in over'. They were known as the Doones of Badgworthy, for though Badgworthy Valley is *not* the Doone Valley, the huts that the legends assign to them as home were in an ancient settlement which had long borne the name *Badgworthy* in one or another of its variant forms—Baga Wordia, Bradeworda, Badgery.

A valley called Hoccombe Combe runs into Badgworthy from the west, its stream rising on Brendon Common. The lower end of this combe is the Doone Valley, and here are the remains of the Badgworthy hamlet which was the home of hermits in the twelfth century and of the Doones in the seventeenth. Fragmentary records suggest continuous occupation from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, and there is evidence to show that one of the houses was occupied in the early nineteenth century. The four-hundred-year gap has been partly filled by the Doone legends, which make the outlaws the noisy and illegal tenants.

Not even ruins can be seen there now, though foundations of some sort may be traced. Early in this century the remnants of the buildings could be clearly seen, and a picture reconstructed that corresponded very closely to Blackmore's description of the Doone village in Chapter 4 of *Lorna Doone*. There does seem very little room to doubt that Blackmore had the Badgworthy settlement in mind as the Doones' headquarters; and the legends certainly place little strain on credulity when they agree with him in this.

Where Blackmore exaggerated, of course, was in his descriptions of such features as the Water Slide and the 'hollow and barren entrance' of the 'Doone-gate'. The entrance to the Doone Valley from Badgworthy is in no way dramatic, and the valley itself is, at any rate on its northern slope, more open than is commonly the case with Exmoor combes. Nor is the celebrated Water Slide here at all, but in Lank Combe, which joins Badgworthy at the southern end of Badgworthy Wood. This interesting formation, three sloping slabs of rock over which the water slides, giving an impression of considerable power, before pitching into a pool and coursing on to Badgworthy, was almost certainly the inspiration of the perilous but unguarded entrance used by John Ridd.

The Wizard's Slough, where Carver Doone met his horrible death, and near which was situated Uncle Reuben Huckaback's mine, cannot be identified. Blackmore seems to suggest that it was somewhere in the Maddacombe area, where there is to this day much wet ground, though nothing answering to the description that he gives of the fearful bog. It is equally impossible to find an exact original for Plover's Barrows Farm, though Oare Ford Farm probably has the best claim to this distinction. Nor is it easy in Oare Church, as it appears today, to reconstruct precisely what happened when Carver Doone shot Lorna.

But in considering these aspects of the story, Blackmore's own words should surely be remembered:

> If I had dreamed that it [*Lorna Doone*] ever would be more than a book of the moment, the descriptions of scenery—which I know as well as I know my garden—would have been kept nearer to their fact. I romanced therein, not to mislead any other, but solely for the uses of my story.

The fact is that *Lorna Doone*, alone of Blackmore's many books, has proved to be much more than 'a book of the moment'. Several different editions are in print to this day, and it is even more popular in the U.S.A. than in Britain. It has been filmed several times. The tourist industry of the West Country owes a great deal to R. D. Blackmore: the 'Dooneland' pilgrims who began to flock into the area soon after the publication of the novel, were the forerunners of a mighty and ever-growing flood.

But romance (Blackmore's own term for the book) is a better word than novel, for it is its romantic appeal that keeps it so popular. In literary merit it is surpassed by two or three of his forgotten books. The author himself found 'something rather childish' in *Lorna Doone* and, if we apply to it, rather unfairly, no doubt, the standards of criticism appropriate to a great novel, we shall be forced to agree with him.

Even so, when every criticism has been spoken, and full allowance made for his entirely justifiable exaggerations, the book repays the closest study by all who are interested in Exmoor. From the opening scenes at Blundell's School (where Blackmore himself was a pupil) to the end of the story, the vitality never flags; and this liveliness springs from the author's supreme confidence in his material and his ability to handle it. He knew Blundell's; he knew and believed in the Doone legends; he knew the Exmoor scene as he knew his garden. Exaggerate he did; but nobody has more securely captured the spirit and essence of the Exmoor landscape.

Yet both Blackmore and the legends omit all reference to a man who was a power in the land in what are commonly supposed to have been the Doone days.

In 1652 the freehold of the Forest was bought by James Boevey from the Parliamentary Commissioners, who were busily engaged in selling off the Crown lands. This Boevey was a London merchant though of Dutch descent and sufficiently well-known to receive a detailed biography in John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*. An extract from the description brings him alive:

> Left off trade at 32, and retired to a country life, by reason of his indisposition, the ayre of the citie not agreeing with him. Then

> in these retirements he wrote *Active Philosophy* (a thing not done before) wherein he enumerated the Arts and Tricks practised in Negotiation, and how they were to be ballanced by prudentiall rules. . . . He speakes the Low Dutch, High Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish and Lingua Franco, and Latin besides his owne. . . . As to his person he is about 5 foot high, slender body, straight haire exceeding black and curling at the end, a dark hazell eie, of a middling size, but the most sprightly I have beheld. Browes and beard of the same colour as his haire. A person of great temperance, and deepe thoughts, and a working head never idle.

This diminutive fellow employed his 'working head' and his knowledge of 'the Arts and Tricks practised in Negotiation' to such effect while on Exmoor that he made many enemies. When the Monarchy was restored in 1660, it was confidently and gleefully expected that this was the end of Boevey; but the little man triumphed, for though he lost the ownership of the Forest, he retained its lease (on very favourable terms) and was Warden of the Forest until his death.

The Wardenship of James Boevey overlapped the Doone period by something like forty years, and it is strange that there is no reflection of this in the legends. The Doone Valley is outside the boundaries of Boevey's kingdom, and nothing that we know of that restless and acquisitive person makes it likely that, as Warden, he would have felt a moral duty to meddle with the robbers, provided that they did not interfere with his interests. On the other hand, he was a man of great determination, with powerful friends both in Commonwealth and in Restoration days. If the Doones had really established the kind of Exmoor tyranny depicted in the legends, they must have come into conflict with Boevey. If no man's sheep were safe, Exmoor would soon have lost its popularity for summer grazing, and the Warden's revenue would have shrunk.

On the other hand—it can be only a guess—if the Doones were there in Boevey's day, the Warden and robbers may have agreed (tacitly or openly) upon their respective spheres of influence, and stuck to them. A certain amount of pressure from the Doones would make the Exmoor graziers conscious of their dependence on Mr. Boevey. If the Warden could offer them protection against the Doones, they would be encouraged to accept his new charges in a philosophical spirit.

We shall never know the answer to the problem, but we can be

PLATE XVIII. The Long Stone, Challacombe. One of the best-known landmarks at the western end of Exmoor, lying at 1,525 feet between Chapman Barrows and the Longstone Barrow group. Almost certainly datable to the Bronze Age between 1500 and 1000 B.C., it is probably a memorial to some chieftain

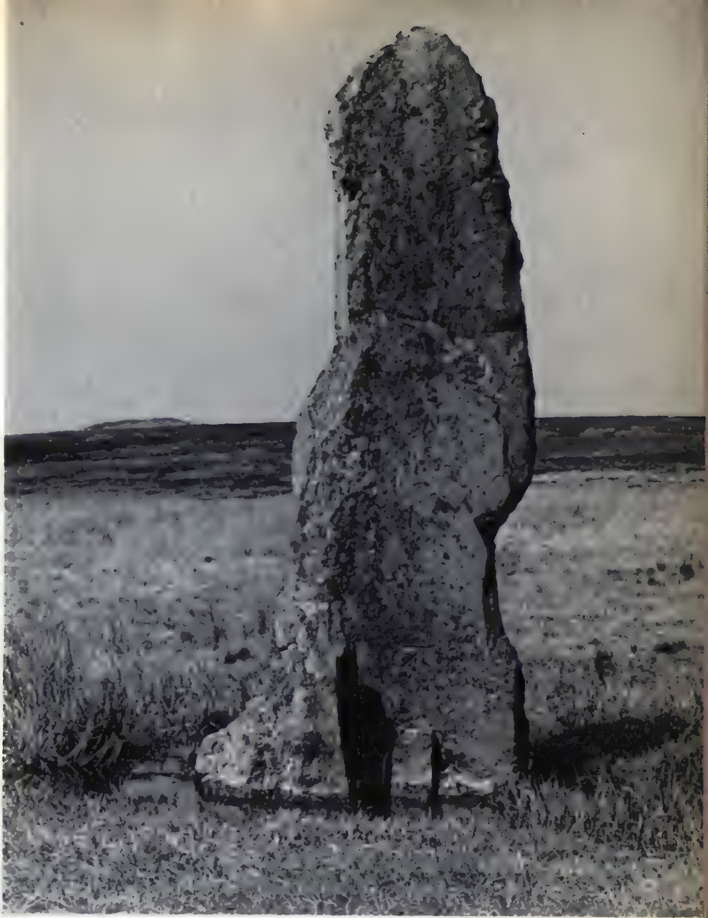


PLATE XIX. Chapman Barrows form the largest and best-known group of Bronze Age burial mounds n the Park. There are eleven, of which five in a straight line now form the parish boundary between Challacombe and Parracombe

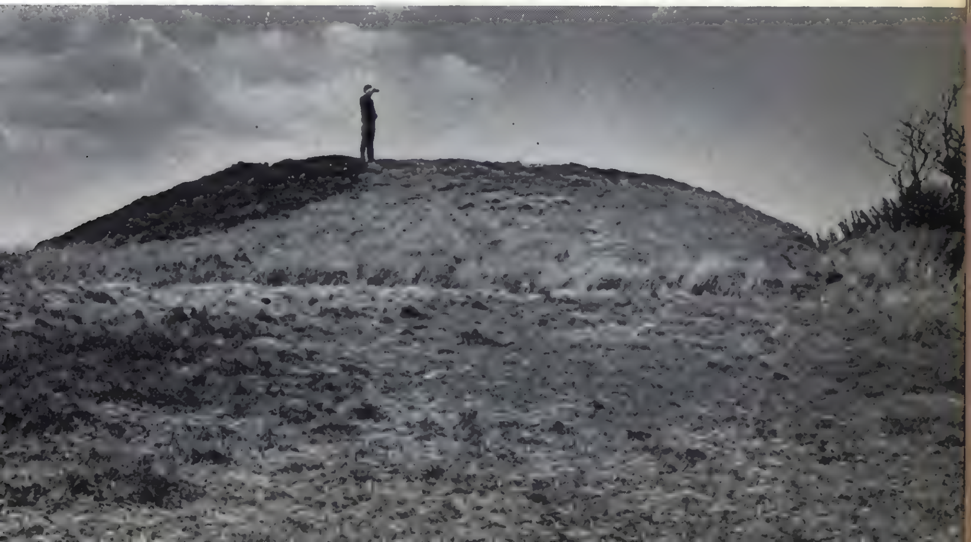


PLATE XX. Exmoor Horn breeding ewes

PLATE XXI. Exmoor Horn sheep being judged at Brendon Fair. This ancient breed is native to the Park. They are generally small, horned in both sexes, and their wool is tough and lustrous

PLATE XXII. Typical North Devon cattle, known as the "Red Rubies" of the West Country

PLATE XXIII. Young trout bred in the Exe Valley Fisheries are used for re-stocking other rivers in Britain

PLATE XXIV. The Forestry Commission's plantations cover about 2750 acres, mostly in the Brendon Hills region. The stacked timber in this photograph is to be made into wood wool

PLATE XXV. Pleasure boats in the small harbour of Lynmouth. The traditional building style of colour-washed cottages contrasts with the new stone-faced building on left

quite sure of one thing: Blackmore heard the Doone legends as a boy on the moor, as generations of Exmoor boys had heard them before, and the legends lost nothing in the telling.

9

Agriculture

by VICTOR BONHAM-CARTER

(i) The Great Reclamation

ANYONE who knows Exmoor, however superficially, is aware that it is not a desolate unrelieved heath, but a sweeping upland of hill grazings and combes, interspersed with farmsteads and green fields. This patchwork of reclamation is the pattern of much of present-day Exmoor, softening the outlines of the landscape and imparting humanity to the beauty of a wild place. This pattern, however, is the outcome of comparatively recent change, due in part to the amazing efforts of John and Frederic Knight, father and son, who pioneered as landlords and farmers for most of the nineteenth century.Their work, the value of which is much misunderstood even now, determined the appearance of a great tract of central Exmoor as we know it today.

Historically, the fringes were being settled at an early date, although long after the hilltops had been crowned with the barrows and fortified enclosures of primitive man. In the east, settlement proceeded more quickly than elsewhere, so that much of the Brendons had been taken into cultivation before the epoch of the Knights. By contrast, the mass of moorland lying west of the Dulverton-Dunster road remained for long a Royal Forest and untamed. By 1300 however, large portions had already been 'disafforested', and not long afterwards the Royal Forest had shrunk to a central core of some 20,000 acres round about the head-waters of the main rivers flowing off the moor. It remained in this general shape and state until 1820, untouched except for the house and enclosure created at Simonsbath by James Boevey in the seventeenth century—a rolling upland, covered with wild grasses, and occasional patches of rush and sedge in the miry parts. Curiously, it was almost free of heather, the result, it has been suggested, of the continuous cropping of cattle, sheep and ponies, which had been depastured there since the Conquest, and probably before that.

When the Royal Forest was established its administration was placed in the hands of a Warden, an officer of the Crown, assisted by a deputy and three or more Foresters or gamekeepers. Their job was to preserve the red deer, control the grazing of stock and other permitted enterprises such as turf-cutting and quarrying, and pay the dues, less certain perquisites, to the royal chest. All customs and payments were regulated at courts, called Swainmotes, held twice a year at Hawkridge and Landacre, though later both meetings were transferred to Simonsbath. After 1508 the Warden leased the entire property from the Crown, and thus became entitled to all the revenue he could collect. Most of this derived from the depasturing of cattle and sheep between March and October, and of ponies all the year round, the property of farmers in the surrounding country. Each spring the rates were 'cried' by the Warden's men in the neighbouring market towns, and thereafter large numbers of stock would move on to the moor. 30,000 sheep was a common total for the season, but there were far fewer cattle and ponies.

Such was the pattern of the management of the Royal Forest, and this continued without fundamental alteration until the early nineteenth century, by which time the Wardenship had come into the hands of the Acland family. By this time too changes were occuring in the agricultural practice of the country, owing to the crop and stock experiments of the great Improvers, such as Townshend, Coke, and others, and to the large-scale compulsory enclosure of open fields and commons, without which scientific progress in farming was impracticable—a process vastly accelerated by the emergency of the Napoleonic Wars.

Little of this, however, affected remote Exmoor until the moment came when the third Sir Thomas Acland applied to the Treasury in 1810, and again in 1812, for the renewal of his lease, due to expire in 1814. In his second application, Sir Thomas stated that if the Government was so disposed, he would be prepared to purchase the freehold of the Forest outright. Meanwhile an official survey was put in hand, following which it was decided to "disafforest" and enclose the whole area, retaining a block of 10,000 acres for the Crown for the growing of timber for the Navy. The remainder of the land was allotted to various interested parties, including the Aclands. In 1818 the Government changed its mind and offered the Crown reserve for sale by tender, probably because the need to find timber for shipbuilding appeared less pressing when the war with France was over. The purchaser was John Knight, an ironmaster from the Midlands, who paid £50,000 (£5 per acre). By 1820, when all the conveyances had been completed, he had also acquired the Acland and certain other allotments, amounting in all to about 15,500 acres or three-quarters of the old Royal Forest. Included in this purchase was the farmstead of Simonsbath, except 12 acres of land set aside by the Crown for the future erection of a church, churchyard, parsonage house and homestead—a provision that was not fulfilled for more than thirty years. Meanwhile the new estate remained extra-parochial, unencumbered by local government dues, a factor of some importance when tenants were being sought for the new holdings created in the 1840s.

John Knight was a man of wealth, will-power, and experience. He was descended from a line of successful industrialists in Shropshire and Worcestershire with whose ability he was well endowed. Beside his interest in industry, he was a keen agriculturalist, and had already been farming on some scale. Of the conditions and possibilities on Exmoor, however, he knew nothing. He was attracted to it because he was a born pioneer and, no doubt, by the social prestige of landownership as well. He wanted in effect to become a great landlord and a great improver, and he wanted his descendants to continue his work and establish a line. With all this in mind, he came down to Exmoor fully prepared with a plan, took up temporary residence at Lynton, and started building a 29-mile wall round his new estate. It took six years to complete, and parts of it survive to this day. He also began the construction of a great mansion at Simonsbath. (Significantly it was never finished, and the shell had to be taken down at the end of the century.) Meanwhile he moved in to the lodge at Simonsbath, and this became his Exmoor home.

John Knight managed the estate himself until 1841, when his son Frederic took over, nine years before his father's death. It was a period characterised by immense efforts, not all of them wise, which none the less made their mark. On the credit side may be reckoned, first, the metalling of over twenty miles of tracks across the moor, radiating from Simonsbath. Without good roads it would have been impossible to crop the land, haul lime from Combe Martin, build new farmsteads, or undertake any major economic or social enterprise. Secondly, there was his breaking of some 2,500 acres of moorland, a huge task that gave encouraging results. His system was: first, pare and burn the top spine of turf and spread the ashes; then lime heavily at three tons per acre; then plough with bullock teams over the winter. This was the key operation, for the plough went right down to the subsoil, to clay and shillet on dry land, and through the clay-iron pan which held the water on wet land, thereby curing water-logging and conditions of extreme acidity, and so vastly improving the potentialities of the soil. Finally, in the succeeding spring, the ground was cross-ploughed and cultivated for a crop. It was at this point that John Knight made his first serious mistake in trying to grow corn and other arable crops, according to the Norfolk four-course rotation, which had answered so well elsewhere in the country. On Exmoor high winds and rainfall and the other deterrents of a high elevation (much of the moor is over 1,000 feet) soon showed that arable cultivation of this kind did not pay; but John Knight refused to recognize it, and persisted longer than he ought to have done. His son however applied the lessons with success.

As regards stock John Knight was no less bold, but here again he made some expensive mistakes. In addition to depasturing cattle and sheep from outside farmers, as of old, he purchased on his own account from the north large numbers of Highland and Hereford cattle, most of them arriving by sea at Lynmouth. But they did not do well. The Highlanders were far too wild, and both required extra feed during the winter. They were also unfamiliar to, and therefore unpopular with, local buyers. Ultimately they were replaced by Devons and Shorthorns, which summered on the higher lands and wintered on the lower, subsisting on roots and hay. He also ran into trouble with the large-scale ranching of sheep, using local Exmoor Horns and imported Cheviots. Apart from stealing, which was rife, the stock failed to winter successfully for similar reasons as for the cattle; and the solution was not found until a rotation of roots and grass was evolved under Frederic Knight in the middle part of the century. Lastly there was an attractive but uneconomic attempt to improve the Exmoor ponies by introducing Arab blood, a venture that even Frederic Knight prolonged beyond its time.

And there were other mistakes: the construction of Pinkworthy Pond, the practical purpose of which no one has yet discovered; the cutting of miles of open drains on the moorland, which merely proved dangerous to horsemen; the failure to grow shelter belts; and the lack of any real attempt to colonise the estate. In short John Knight tried to run before he could walk, launching out in a large way without adequate pilot experiments, and keeping everything far too closely in his own hands. Yet his positive achievement was tremendous, for he proved that the moorland could be broken and farmed, and even his failures bore fruit by showing his son what he should avoid.

When Frederic took over from his father, he immediately initiated a new policy by returning to the traditional pattern of landlord and tenant, but with certain modifications. Honeymead and Cornham already had homesteads, and he managed to let these as separate farms, together with his own house and attached holding in Simonsbath, by 1844. By 1848 he had created eight more farmsteads and let them all to tenants. Emmett's Grange was finally let to Robert Smith, an able farmer from Lincolnshire, who also acted as agent to the estate. It was a fortunate choice, for Smith was both a bold and practical farmer, and a far-seeing legislator. It was he who drew up the excellent leases which awarded a tenant both long-term security and a low initial rent, in return for breaking and fencing the land according to an agreed scheme of improvement and husbandry. Fields were generally laid out in large blocks, bordered by high banks and beech hedges, which served the cattle as fences and shelters against the weather. The beech plants did especially well—they are a feature of Exmoor to this day—and in 1850 no less than £16 was spent on beech nuts for sowing on farm banks and on copses at Simonsbath. It was Smith too who ultimately worked out a seven-year rotation for the support of stock, the latter being the only practicable form of income on these high upland holdings. The scheme was first tried at Emmett's Grange and consisted of: turnips, fed to stock on the ground, followed by ley and rape, which turned into pasture lasting four years before being broken for oats. All this of course had to be matched by the skilful management of stock and grass, the generous application of lime, and in some cases the practice of field irrigation at which Smith was a past master. Unfortunately the first tenants were mostly up-country farmers, wedded to dairy and arable husbandry, which they proceeded to apply to Exmoor, with fatal results. All but a few failed, and it was several years before they were replaced by local men, who knew the conditions and followed Smith's advice. Some of the latter had started as labourers and shepherds on the estate, and were given generous assistance in their early years as farmers. By 1860, however, the new pattern was being firmly established, and the estate as a whole was just paying its way.

Meanwhile Frederic Knight was busy on his own account. Outside Exmoor he led a full life as a man of business and member of Parliament, both of which he combined with close attention to affairs at Simonsbath. On visits he stayed at Lynton, as the home farm was let, and did not return to Simonsbath until 1860. Thus accommodated, he drove forward the enterprise of the estate and, despite shortage of funds over the diversion of a family inheritance, continued to invest a good deal of money in new ventures. One of these was mining.

John Knight had acquired all mineral rights when he purchased the estate, but he had never exploited the iron ore which was known to exist all over the moor, some of which had been worked in a superficial and desultory way in former times. His son however took action. Between 1846 and 1860 a series of attempts was made both by him at the Wheal Eliza mine on the Barle, and by no less than three outside concerns (including the Dowlais Iron Works of Wales) at a variety of places such as Cornham Ford, Burcombe, Deer Park, Hangley Cleeve, and Pickedstones. Wheal Eliza was the first, and this was begun by a local syndicate in search of copper. No copper was found, but the iron ore was of sufficient quality and quantity to encourage Frederic Knight to assume the lease himself in 1855. It was not a totally wild adventure. Expert investigators had made favourable reports, and it was known that iron ore was being profitably extracted in the Brendon Hills, not far away to the east. However, neither at Wheal Eliza nor at any of the other places was the initial promise fulfilled. In every case the veins pinched out to nothing, and the whole enterprise was ultimately abandoned, including the proposed railway from Porlock Weir. A second attempt just before the First World War also failed. All that remains today are the relics of a few buildings, some scraps of iron, and a number of water-filled shafts. But lovers of Exmoor must be glad of this failure.

Frederic Knight's other ventures compose a very different tale. By the late 1860s the tenancies had been consolidated, and excellent progress made with reclamation and ranching on whatever farmland was in hand together with the unenclosed portions of the estate, some 9,000 acres in all. This was made possible by the roots and grass rotation, which was varied by Robert Smith's successor Frederick Loveband Smyth (and by his son G. C. Smyth-Richards who took on the agency after him) who substituted rape for turnips in the first year or two. Rape was a most successful crop on Exmoor, cheaper to grow, better suited to the soil and climate, highly palatable to stock, and effective in helping to break down the overburden of peat right down to the clay-iron pan, which was then broken up with powerful steam ploughs. Several hundred acres were reclaimed in the 1870s and early 1880s in this way, all subsequently laid down to long leys.

All this enabled Frederic Knight to launch out into a massive experiment in stock ranching, mainly sheep. 5,000 Scottish Blackface and Cheviot ewes were brought down from Scotland, together with their shepherds, and stationed about the estate in eight herdings. Subsisting on the improved grazings, rape and hay, they soon became acclimatised and produced a steady average of very nearly one lamb per ewe. These lambs fattened well in the summer on grass and late-sown rape, and either were sold live to purchasers at Simonsbath, or were driven to South Molton for killing, the carcases being conveyed in special railway vans to London. The herding system has survived in essence to this day, and the tremendous improvements to the moorland also made possible the rearing of store cattle and heifers—Devons and Shorthorns mostly—in quality and quantity unmatched in the old days of Forest summering.

All this must be ascribed to the initiative and persistence of the Knights and their agents, quite apart from their establishment of new farms, and their colonisation of the moor, notably at Simonsbath itself. In 1818 John Knight's new estate supported one house and five people. In 1852 the population had risen to just under 300, farmhouses and cottages had been built, a school served 30 children, and within a few years a civil and ecclesiastical parish was created, together with a church and parsonage house. The population, although differently distributed, is no less today.

Perhaps the severest test of the Knights' work arose in the bad times following the decline of British farming after 1880, when cheap corn, chilled meat, and other produce began to pour in from overseas, at prices with which home farmers were unable to compete. On Exmoor further reclamation ceased. The men on the estate, landlord and tenants alike, kept going with what they had. Leys were left down, and a minimum of ploughing and fertilising was done. The past served to sustain the present in its adversity. Frederic Knight suffered a keener blow by the death of his only son at the age of 28 in 1879. Not long after he sold the reversion of the estate to his neighbours, the Fortescues, of Castle Hill, Filleigh; and with his death in 1897, the great story of the Knights of Exmoor came to an end.

(ii) Farming in the Twentieth Century

EXMOOR in the nineteenth century has been described in terms of the great pioneer efforts of the Knight family, centred upon Simonsbath. Yet by 1900 the essential pattern of moorland farming—the breeding of beef and sheep on the uplands for finishing in the vale—had not been altered so much as given greater strength and balance. Much of the moor belonged to a handful of great landowners, and has remained so with a few changes of title to the present day. Taken together, their tenants and the owner occupiers, farming between 50 and 300 acres each, make up the majority of holdings over the whole National Park in its present extent. Moreover stability in farm practice and the resources of the great estates helped sustain moorland life (and economy) in the bad times that afflicted agriculture between the 1880s and the 1940s. But much of the land went back, and there was a steady deterioration of buildings and fixed equipment. Hedges grew to thickets, banks collapsed and stone dyking was abandoned: stock ran through the gaps from one field to another, to water perhaps at a distant stream, and rabbits proliferated in their millions. Indeed the sale of rabbits became an important item of income, likewise the lodging of summer visitors and the sale of teas, none of which derived from farming proper. Field husbandry stood still. Liming and slagging—essential to counteract the acidity of the soil—were rarely done. The horse plough was taken round a limited number of fields for roots and oats. There were no leys, only permanent pasture, usually infested with rush and bracken and hardly distinguishable from the rough grazings outside the enclosed land. Hay was cut late for bulk rather than quality on the same fields year after year.

By the 1930s hill farming on Exmoor was dying on its feet. One owner of a village store related how all his customers lived on credit, and that debts of long standing were handed down from father to son. He, the publican, the corn merchant, and the vet carried the community, and the bank carried most of them. Yet social customs stayed strong: harvest festival, church and chapel outings, the school tea, summer revels and races, the pony fair, hunting—a universal passion, on foot or on horse—fishing, and some poaching of course: in all, a very vital way of living despite the bad times.

But even this vitality would have finally evaporated without aid. A post-war survey of 400 farms by Bristol University showed how far the rot had gone. A hill farm of 150 acres, the average size, earned hardly more than the value of family labour, sometimes less. Moreover many had taken to dairying, not intrinsically suited to these upland areas, for the sake of the monthly milk cheque, to the detriment of beef which locked up capital too long.

Happily since 1945 legislation has done much to restore the basis of prosperity. Grants have been made available for new or converted buildings, land reclamation, fencing, field drainage, piped water and roads; for ploughing up old pastures, fertilising and re-seeding; for keeping breeding stock of suitable strains and for rearing calves. Not all these measures have been retained, and the guarantees under the annual price review for farm stock and produce have been far from constant. Yet the total effect has been one of remarkable regeneration, and the change in the appearance of the farms over the past twenty years has been striking.

Stand at a vantage point on a spring day and look around you at the patchwork landscape. In one direction you will see a stretch of rough moor, heath and moorland grasses predominating, sliced by gullies and short steep combes, and grazed by groups of cattle, sheep, ponies and even intruding red deer. They will wander far, for the keep is sparse. Only road grids and gates limit their territory, or distant fencing recently much revived. There are few true commons on Exmoor, nearly all the rough land is privately owned, although access is by custom usually open and free. Along the edges of the moorland are groups of enclosed fields in varying degrees of green. The darkest are the permanent pastures, studded perhaps with rush and gorse. The medium greens are the richest, leys of varying age with swards of cocksfoot, clovers, timothy and ryegrasses, under grazing or laid up for hay or even sufficiently forward for an early cut of silage. The lightest green are the young corn, a field or two only for oats or barley, all for consumption on the farm. The brown patches are waiting to be drilled for winter roots.

In the centre of these in-fields stands the farmstead. The typical farmhouse is rectangular in shape, short ends east-west where the weather comes from, of grey or buff local stone, often whitewashed, and roofed with slate. The older farm buildings stand beside it in a quadrangle, or simply in a straight block, and consist mainly of shippons with haylofts over. Nowadays there will be a Dutch barn as well, and a shed for machinery. On the high farms there will be a windbreak of beech.

The farmer will keep a standing flock of, say, 200–250 breeding ewes, Exmoor Horn or Devon Closewool, famous for their fine fleece and sweet mutton, if he is following tradition. If he is branching out on his own, he may have an 'up-country' breed such as Clun Forest or Kerry Hill, more prolific but carrying coarser fleeces, and bad breakers-out. Or he may have Scottish Blackface, the hardiest of all hill breeds, that remain out on the high ground all the year round; or Cheviot, brought south with their shepherds by the Knights more than a hundred years ago, and prospering ever since. Lambs are born in the late spring and run with their mothers during the summer. Many of them are sold a year later at the autumn sales at such places as Cutcombe, Brendon or Raleigh's Cross, the latter an isolated inn, high up on the Brendons, looking towards the Bristol Channel. The farmer in most cases will also keep a herd of 25–30 red Devons, a local breed, with long horns, scientifically improved by the Quartly family in the early nineteenth century, and producing high-quality meat on a neat carcass. Like the sheep they do well on poor pastures and stand up to the rough climate. The cows calve in March–May, and the calves run with them until October, when they are yarded, and ultimately sold as stores for fattening off in the vale. It is a common experience to hear an auctioneer preface the bidding with 'Fine and healthy animals, straight off the moor, gentlemen'. And it will be true.

The farmer may keep an Exmoor pony, a sturdy little animal, brown, bay or dun, with a mealy muzzle—yet another product of climate and hard conditions, and belonging to an ancient native breed. In the days of depression Exmoor ponies fell on hard times.

The foals were rounded up and sold annually for a few shillings at Bampton Fair on the last Thursday in October. Most of them went for meat. Since then they have come back into their own as foundation stock for the breeding of polo ponies and hunters and as children's mounts. Out on the moor they run wild all the year round, subsisting on what they can find, and they thrive on it, developing an iron constitution and tremendous powers of endurance.

Every farm used to have its posse of hens running about the yard and a pig in the sty. Then came the battery and deep litter, and the 'controlled-environment' house for baconers, so that it no longer paid to keep small stock as a side-line. Yet the farmer's wife will probably still have a few hens, even if the eggs do not pay, and a house cow for milk and cream to sell to summer visitors. These stock-rearing farms are traditionally family units. Many families have farmed the same land for generations, and because of that some have become set in their ways, and suspicious of innovation; yet this very conservatism has stood them in good stead by strengthening their resolve not to give up when times were bad. A drive over the Brendon Hills or along the by-roads down to Withypool or Winsford or Exford will reveal how the Exmoor farmer has moved with the times—a dirty field and a broken hedge will be exceptional, more likely you will see a new Dutch barn stuffed with silage and hay, a TV mast on the house, a car, a tractor or two and the latest type of forage harvester. The farm road will be in reasonable repair, and poles carry main electricity and a telephone line.

All this is not the result of charity doled out by the taxpayer, but of making it possible for hill farming to survive in the highly rationalised economy of today. Moreover, as a National Park, Exmoor cannot be judged solely in terms of commercial profit or loss. As an area of great natural beauty and historical interest, and a reservoir of wild life, it belongs to our national heritage of landscape. Its attraction lies in this and in the way it has been partly tamed by man. We must be on our guard that neither aspect damages or destroys the other: that the farmer may earn his living without heedless interference from the tourist, but also that the moors remain wild and free of access, and that the National Park although privately owned may continue to be publicly enjoyed.

10

The Ports of North Devon and Somerset

by MICHAEL BOUQUET

On the Exmoor coast a century ago there were a number of small maritime communities living by and for the sea and serving the agricultural hinterland. Often the owners of the vessels were themselves farmers or connected with the agricultural community through near relations. Up to a century ago it was often easier to move goods by sea along the coast than it was to transport them by packhorse over the ill-made tracks of Exmoor. The waters of the Bristol Channel remained a natural highway to South Wales right into the present century, as they had from ancient times. Much of the coastline of the National Park is steep and inhospitable to the mariner. Only in a few places, where the turbulent moorland rivers shed their waters, was it safe to anchor a ship to unload cargoes or take on stores.

You may think you know Exmoor well, and yet not know this splendid coast from the sea. From Bull Point with its lighthouse, past Ilfracombe with the white terraces and St. Nicholas' chapel that make it so romantic a spot from the sea, one comes to a sheer rocky coast, with a sandy cove at Hele beach, a secluded inlet at Watermouth and so to Combe Martin where there is no harbour or pier but where the seas are broken by a barrier of stones—the Weir. From here, where one enters the National Park, to Lynmouth come ten miles of sheer bold cliffs of tremendous height, steep to the sea at the foot, coloured with reds and purples and rising to 1,000 and 1,100 feet, with inaccessible beaches, waterfalls and caves. East of Lynmouth and the Foreland lighthouse comes another grand escarpment, hills rising to 1,200 feet, with five fathoms of water close inshore. In some places the slopes are wooded nearly to the summit, in others they are bold and bare with stony screes tumbling down to the water's edge, or sparsely shaded with storm-bowed and stunted oak trees.

Porlock Weir, Lynmouth and Combe Martin—the last is just outside the western boundary of the Park but is closely linked with the rest of Exmoor—were small ports, with much coming and going of many small craft. The vessels, smacks, ketches and schooners, looked larger than they really were when crowded together against a backcloth of steep hillsides, and the complicated details of their rigging, and the stir of many small cargoes being loaded or discharged by hand, gave the place a busy air. The account book of an unnamed Porlock sloop kept during the Napoleonic war shows cargoes of barley to Swansea, timber to Bristol, limestone from Aberavon and provisions from Bristol to Porlock. One small vessel was owned by John Clarke of West Lynch, miller and maltster. Her account book shows how the whole agricultural economy of the district was bound up with the need for easy access by sea to Bristol and to South Wales.

The Luttrells of Dunster Castle had strong links with the sea-trade; their vessels traded to Boulogne. So that larger vessels than could be accommodated at Porlock or Lynmouth might trade with the district, Squire George Luttrell in 1616 built a fine quay at Minehead. And at the other extremity of Exmoor—but, like Minehead, outside the Park—facilities at Ilfracombe were greatly improved when another prominent family, the Bourchiers, also built a quay.

So difficult were inland communications that for some of the small, sea-faring communities along the Exmoor coast it was easier to charter a ship and have it discharge a cargo on the beach than for carters to cross Exmoor. At the estate of Glenthorne (798496), an isolated and picturesque mansion looking out to sea and backed by wooded heights, one family traded direct with South Wales. Even in the present century coal for the house and estate was brought by sea. A smack would edge her way into the sheltered cove where the house stands; at high water she would be put ashore and on the receding tide her cargo would be unloaded over the side into waiting carts. On a beach below Emmel Wood between Culbone and Glenthorne, smacks sometimes loaded pitprops for South Wales. Bark for tanning was regularly exported from Porlock Weir and Lynmouth to Penzance a century ago. There were timber cargoes up to Bristol, bricks from Porlock Weir, and everywhere cargoes of limestone and coal. In many spots along this coast one can see the deserted lime kilns, like that at Heddon's Mouth, which tell how vessels must have once brought limestone and culm to desolate and almost inaccessible beaches.

With so much of the Exmoor coast denied to ships the district had to rely for more distant cargoes on the ports of Minehead and Watchet to the east, and Ilfracombe to the west; more distant again, but still supplying the Exmoor region with some of the necessities of life, were Bridgwater, and to the west a whole complex of little ports, Bideford, Appledore, Fremington, Barnstaple and Braunton.

Watchet church stands on its hill looking out across the great estuary, its churchyard filled with the graves of departed mariners; the church is dedicated to St. Decuman, one of those attractive, if obscure, Celtic missionaries who converted so much of Devon and Somerset to Christianity. Porlock church standing in its golden vale has its dedication to another Welsh Saint, St. Dubricius, Bishop of Llandaff about 520. Here is evidence of the ancient links with the land across the water.

At Minehead in fulfilment of a vow made while in some peril at sea, a local mariner Robert Quirck built and endowed a row of almshouses in 1630. They stand yet, and a brass plate above the doorway of one house shows a three-masted ship, fully rigged. Amateurs of 'brasses' know this one as among the few on which a ship is enengraved.

In the eighteenth century Minehead harbour served as a windbound port for ships bound out of the Bristol Channel to Newfoundland; it had a steady import trade of woollen yarn from Ireland, to be sold in the Yarn Market at Dunster to the weavers of West Somerset and North Devon. It was the centre of a busy coasting trade by small ships trading up to Bristol, down to Cornwall and across to South Wales—vessels locally built, locally owned and locally manned, and with delightful names like *Peep of Day*, *Lovely Peggy*, *Sociable Friends*, *Willing Mind*, *Sturdy Beggar* and *Who'd have thought it*. In these names one can savour the essence of the rustic shipowning of the eighteenth century; with its little ships bringing in coal, culm for the lime kilns, salt and groceries, and sailing out with timber, bark, barley and apples. These vessels were small; the capital outlay involved in their construction was well within the resources of these small communities. For example, when a Minehead shipwright Thomas Manston built the *Unanimity*, a 33-ton sloop, on the open beach in 1798, it cost her owner Squire Luttrell £106 10s. 9¾d.

But it was in the mid-nineteenth century that the maritime traffic of the Exmoor coast was at its height. From 1800 to 1865 nearly 50 vessels were launched at Ilfracombe, by no means all coasters. At one time early in the nineteenth century over 70 vessels were owned in Ilfracombe. An 1851 Directory lists a shipbuilder and 26 master mariners among the inhabitants. The shipyard lay in a little cove between cliff and high water just opposite the old quayhead, and there the shipwrights' adzes and the caulkers' mallets played their tunes among all the characteristic sights and smells of the wooden shipyard. Yet it did not need a regular established shipyard for those resourceful craftsmen to build their little trading vessels. Wooden shipbuilding on this scale needed no expensive fixed equipment, and trading vessels were often built in the most unlikely places. For instance, Squire Bassett of Watermouth Castle had a little sloop, the *Cruiser*, built on the beach at Watermouth in 1866. Another smack, the *John & William*, named after the elder sons of her joint owners, was launched at the back of the little dock at Porlock Weir in 1858. A much larger schooner the *Perriton* was launched from the open beach at Minehead in 1881 from a site now covered by an hotel and the esplanade. The *Perriton*, a famous ship upon the coast, survived until in the First World War she was sunk by a German submarine.

Watchet was the port for the Brendon ore trade. The line of the West Somerset Mineral Railway ran from the mines down to the harbour, where iron ore was loaded into local vessels for South Wales. In one week in July 1868, two vessels arrived at Watchet with culm from Swansea, five with coal from various ports, and one with timber from Bristol; three sailed with iron ore for Newport, two with general cargo for South Wales, and one with stone for East Quantoxhead.

The influence of the sea and seamen made its mark in the lovely villages of Exmoor in another way. At nights in the local inns sea-shanties would be sung round the peat fire, often by local lads who had deserted the farm for the sea. One achieved distinction as a singer. He is John Short (1839–1933), Yankee Jack to his contemporaries, a Watchet seaman who sang for Cecil Sharp 57 sea-shanties, of which 43 appear in Sharp's *English Folk Chanteys*. John Short went to sea in his 'teens, and spent over 30 years in merchant ships sailing all over the world, including voyages in North American sailing ships at the time of the American Civil War. He returned to Watchet to become mate in local coasters, and later still, Town Crier. For much of his time at sea he was the recognized shanty-man who sang the solo part of the working songs aboard the ships he served in. Sharp described his voice as 'rich, resonant and powerful', and remarked upon his mental alertness, his tenacious memory and great musical ability. Sea-shanties have long since passed into our general heritage of national folk song. Some of the credit for this must certainly go to John Short, a country-bred sailor with his roots deep in his own harbour town, and his mind stored with the peasant tunes of an older England.

As a way of keeping the Exmoor region supplied with the creature comforts, the coasting trade is finished. Trade may have left the little ports and havens, but it is difficult to keep West Country people from the sea. Sailing clubs flourish at Minehead, Porlock Weir and elsewhere, and it is probable that in a few years' time more men and women will be sailing for pleasure off the Exmoor coast than ever sailed out of its little havens to earn their living in the smacks and schooners of a century ago.

11

Recreations in the Park

by THE EDITOR

WALKING

The whole of the National Park, except for the dangerous cliffs and a few boggy places, is ideal country for the walker. Walking on heather and grass moors is wonderfully exhilarating, for the ground is springy underfoot and there is often a breeze blowing straight off the sea. Traversing old ling, grown to knee height, can be tiring after a while; and picking a way across a bog needs time and patience.

The bogs are never dangerous and probably wet feet and legs is the worst that can happen, but the rewards can be unexpectedly pleasing—cotton grass, mounds of brightly coloured sphagnum moss, which deflate like a sponge when trodden on, pools of dark water the haunt of dragonflies, and the calls of snipe and curlew.

Some combes have steep sides and in dry weather these can be slippery; it is advisable no matter how fine the weather to walk in stout shoes with gripping soles. To be well shod and equipped with a long, strong stick pays dividends when you wish to cross a rocky stream or descend a slope in search of dipper or ring ouzel.

From the point of access, in general one can walk anywhere on open heather country or across commons; always remembering that in hot sun an empty bottle thrown away can ignite a dry moor almost as quickly as a match, and a heath fire brings devastation.

All of Exmoor is farmed and although the large grass moors have the appearance of being open country, they carry large numbers of sheep and cattle. When gates are left open, or a dog chases sheep, farmers suffer. All visitors to the National Park have a duty to respect the property over which they pass and to ensure they do no damage by observing the rules of the Country Code set out on page 109.

A long-distance footpath crosses the Park from east to west. It is part of the coastal footpath planned by the Countryside Commission which will girdle the whole south-west peninsula from Minehead to Studland in Dorset. For all of its 32 miles in the Park it is the grandstand for magnificent views of the sea and of the Welsh coast on one side, and inland the moors roll away to distant heights.

There are also many signposted and waymarked walks. Descriptive booklets are available from the National Park Information Centres at Minehead and Lynton. In addition to remnants of the former ancient trackways and footpaths, there are many miles of deep banked lanes offering refreshing walking after several hours spent on the open moor.

Exmoor accommodation is heavily booked in August and anyone wishing to explore the moor on foot at that time is advised to settle upon headquarters in advance. Different parts of the moor can then be visited in turn, although this may not be quite so adventurous as trekking from place to place. There is generally no difficulty, except in August, in finding a night's lodging at a farm or cottage.

HORSE RIDING

Exmoor is wonderful riding country. There are riding stables in a number of villages, and some farms will hire out a pony by the day. Most of what has been written about walking also applies to riding, with one important reservation—when a horse gets into a bog it seems to panic and makes a violent effort to get free. Consequently the insecure vegetation is broken down, the water churned up and the unfortunate animal sinks to its belly. A rider whose horse flounders should jump off, loosen the girths or better still remove the saddle, and lead the horse to safety. However, riders of local Exmoor ponies have little to worry about, for their mounts have grown up wild on the moor and they know the smell of bog and avoid it. The danger is when both mount and rider are strange to the moor.

Details of riding stables and farms with ponies for hire can be obtained from the Information Centres at Minehead and Lynton.

STAG HUNTING

Three packs hunt the deer on and around the National Park. The biggest and most important is the Devon and Somerset Staghounds based at Exford. The Quantock Staghounds hunt the Quantocks and the Tiverton Staghounds the foothills to the south and west.

There is a close season from springtime to the early part of August, when the Devon and Somerset stage their big opening meet at Cloutsham. The stag is hunted until late autumn; then follows a spell of hind hunting. Spring stag hunting finishes the season.

Stag hunting follows a set pattern of meets, about three a week, and the actual chase is also divided into well defined phases. First the 'harbourer', a highly skilled tracker, reports to the Master the whereabouts of the day's quarry. Then the 'tufters', a small group of old and experienced hounds, are sent in to draw the woods or covert.

When the deer has been forced into the open and has been seen as a stag old enough and fit enough to run, the pack is 'laid on' the scent of the animal.

A hundred riders may take part in the chase and perhaps four or five times as many cars. In the summer the hunt may meet several times without making a kill. A high standard of horsemanship and a good mount are required. Some of the places where the visitor can attend a meet and at the same time get a good view of the moor are Cloutsham, Hawkcombe Head, County Gate and Winsford Hill. Unless an expert moorland driver the visitor is well advised to choose a high vantage point and stay there.

FISHING

Fresh water. The streams and rivers in the Park abound with brown trout. Catching them can be a lively business for the water is often narrow and rapid with few pools and much broken water. The fish are likewise small and lively. They are fished mainly with dry fly, although a spinner is effective when dark water is pouring off the hills, and building high in the rivers. The best months for trout fishing are usually May, June and September. Fish average about ten to eleven inches. Visitors wishing to fish will find it best to contact one of the twenty or so fishing inns, many of which have their own stretch of water, and advice is available of the Minehead Information Centre. In the lower reaches of the Exe and the Barle salmon are caught.

The West Somerset Water Board encourage fishing in the 130-acre Clatworthy Reservoir, situated at the western end of the Brendons and a mile or so west of Clatworthy village.

Sea fishing. There is excellent sea fishing to be had from boats at Minehead, Lynmouth and Porlock Weir, and off the rocks. At the seaside resorts there are boatmen who know the best places to fish, a choice governed by the time of year and the state of the water. Fishing tackle dealers at these places supply equipment and give advice based on long experience. Whether you fish with a rod or trail a line behind the boat, depends on the clarity of the sea and the weather conditions. Rod fishers catch skate, tope, conger, whiting and bass. Mackerel, pollack and bass are caught on a line. During the summer high tides, shoals of mullet come close inshore. They can be caught from the harbour wall at Lynmouth and from rocks that jut into deep water.

THE COAST FROM THE SEA

Much has been written in this guide to the Exmoor National Park about the beauty and geology of the cliffs that form the northern boundary. If this has had the effect of persuading someone who might otherwise not have done so to visit one of the spectacular viewpoints or made a visitor's walk more interesting by explaining some of the less obvious characteristics of the scenery and wild life, then the Editor and contributors will feel that one of the purposes of the guide will have been achieved.

However, much of the coast is inaccessible to the walker, and indeed there are parts of the lower cliffs where no human foot treads from one year's end to the next. In these lonely margins from dawn to dusk there is the call of seabirds, the sad moans of grey seals and the crash of tremendous seas.

Although this wild and forbidding coast is denied to the walker, it can be looked upon with awe and wonder from the sea. From Lynmouth boats take visitors along the coast to view the seabird colonies. Although the parties of auks and gulls on the ledges and rocks are in themselves of interest, the visitor will find here the greatest wildness of all, the poetry and the purpose that he will often have sensed through a seaweed tang in the air, or in the sound of the sea afar off, as he walked a moorland ridge or sat beside a moorland river, spiritually at one with Nature.

12

Places of Interest

BARLINCH PRIORY (929290). The ruins of a small priory in the Exe valley about one mile north of Dulverton, founded by Augustinian Canons in 1340, and endowed with the manor and church of Brompton Regis. Apart from the Benedictine cell of Bath Abbey at Dunster, it was the only religious house in the moorland district of west Somerset.

BLACKMOOR GATE (647432). Junction of A39 and A399 roads to Combe Martin, Barnstaple, Lynton, South Molton, with a hotel and garage. The north prospect is of the great hog's-back hills of Holdstone Down and Trentishoe Down and inland majestic skylines surmount the lonely moors.

BRENDON (770480). A picturesque village on the East Lyn river. From the church which is one mile west of the village and at the summit of a steep hill are splendid views of cleaves with oak woods and scree-covered slopes that characterise this area. This large parish includes remnants of three Domesday estates, Badgworthy, Cheriton and Lank Combe, whose names are now lost in the moors. The Lynton–Oare road runs beside water spills and salmon pools of the East Lyn. There are an hotel, guest houses, a shop or two and a garage.

BRENDON COMMON (768447). The common, which includes open moors on both sides of B3223, is one of the great open spaces of the Park. Wide moorlands are incised by the valleys of Farley Water, Hoccombe Water, Badgworthy Water and by many streams. Areas of grass, bracken and bog form a patchwork on the heather hills. Rowan and thorn trees grow in the combes and clumps of ferns spring from between the rocks. This is the best place in the Park to watch Exmoor ponies in their natural state: it is inadvisable to approach the animals as a kick can cause serious injury.

BROMPTON REGIS (953315). The main village of the southern Brendons, surrounded by undulating hills, covered with symmetrical fields, wide earth banks and beech hedges. The village is neatly grouped with the inn, shops, post office, school, farm and houses along the four sides of the churchyard. It was once a market town, with the grant of a Fair to be held on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, August 15. The records go back beyond the Norman Conquest to the days of King Harold, the Royal Manor then being held by Harold's mother, who refused to hand it over to William the Conqueror. The church, larger than most in the area, has a 13th-century tower, a perpendicular nave, and a beautiful screen. One of the bells once belonged to Barlinch Priory.

CHALLACOMBE (694410). This small moorland hamlet on the B3358, the name meaning 'Cold valley', is surrounded by scattered farmsteads, many of which have interesting histories. Wallover Barton, for instance, was 'the farm of the Britons' and may have been a settlement of Celtic farmers which continued into Saxon times. There are an inn, a post-office-shop, petrol station, guest house and several hospitable cottagers.

COMBE MARTIN (585465). A seaside village on the A399 just outside the north-west boundary of the Park—cliffs and shallow bays skirt the road from there to Ilfracombe. The rose-coloured sandstone church, contrasting agreeably with the more usual grey stone, has a tower rising 99 feet to the battlements. Hotels, guest houses and shops spread along the valley of the Umber to form one of the longest villages in England. A steep climb leads to the craggy headlands of Little Hangman and Great Hangman that make such a noble introduction to the Park. The district is well known for strawberry growing and for silver mines worked from the 13th century to 1875.

COUNTISBURY (746496). A hilltop hamlet situated two miles to the east of Lynton, on the A39. Cottages beside the road boast remarkable chimneys, tall, round and heavily cowled. By walking through the churchyard out on to the cliff face one may enjoy a view of the Bristol Channel. (See Chapter 6 for description of near-by Wind Hill, an extensive earthwork.) There are an inn and a garage.

CULBONE (843483). Focal point of the parish is the minute parish church set deep in coastal woods. One of the most attractive of several steep footpaths to Culbone, branching from the A39, is through Culbone woods. Six hundred feet below and at about the same distance above the wave-torn cliff is the building measuring 12 yards long and 12 feet wide, where nothing has been changed for about 800 years. The church probably originated on the site of an early Christian hermitage, or the cell of an anchorite, perhaps from Wales, and the registers have been faithfully kept since the middle of the 16th century. Usually there was little to record; but in one period of 50 years there were 75 marriages, and no burials at all in one period of 25 years though in an equal period that followed 43 people were laid to rest. Unfortunately many of the pages of the 17th-century register have been plundered. The woods were formerly a centre for charcoal burners, the earliest of whom were a colony of lepers. The pits can still be seen today.

DULVERTON (913279). Larger than most Exmoor villages but not quite a town, it is the 'capital' of S.E. Exmoor; the home of the Rural District Council, a secondary modern school and rural services. The Barle is a wide and glittering river, spanned by a sturdy old bridge of five arches, the cause of innumerable traffic hold-ups. There is no lack of accommodation and the choice ranges from a three-star hotel to comfortable cottages. It is said that you can buy anything here, certainly that is true of anything to do with horses and riders, for it is a great centre for hunting. It has provided material for some famous books and Richard Jefferies studied the red deer here. Jan Ridd met Lorna Doone and so began the famous romance; and Lord Tennyson, when in Dulverton in 1891, wrote of Exmoor as 'the land of bubbling streams'. Salmon and trout fishing are available to visitors.

DUNKERY (891416). The Beacon, rising 1,706 feet, is the summit of the Park. The area is within the National Trust Holnicote estate formerly belonging to the Acland family. For the walker a visit to the Park is incomplete without a climb from Luccombe to Joaney How Beacon (1,403 feet) and thence along the spine of the moors past Kit Barrow (1,453 feet), Dunkery, Rowbarrows (1,675 feet) and down to Exford Common through some of the highest and wildest country in the Park. The hills form the skyline broken by steep faces and deep valleys while underfoot are heather, grass and bracken. Deer may be seen, and sometimes black and red grouse, hawks, falcons and ravens. Generally, the walker's companions are larks and meadow pipits, wild ponies, and Scottish Blackface sheep. The summit of the beacon is the site of an ancient warning system—faggots were kept ready to be fired in case of invasion or to celebrate a national event.

DUNSTER (990435). This is the most visited place in the Park. On a summer's day crowds throng the village street gazing at the Butter Cross, the Yarn Market, the hotel that was once monastic, the Tudor houses, and the noble church. It has been said of Dunster that from the Cross to the Castle is the fairest prospect of any English village street: certainly the massive castle on its hilltop makes the picture unique in the Park. Norman in origin, the vast structure has changed much through eight centuries. Apart from the 11th-century tower, the oldest walls are now in the Tudor front; the gateway leading up to the terrace has an iron-banded door that has been opening and shutting for 650 years. In its long history the castle has had only two owners, the medieval family of de Mohun and for the past five hundred years the Luttrells. The castle is open to the public.

EXFORD (853384). Pleasant, well-cared-for village in the higher Exe valley. Some hotels, shops and cottages are attractively grouped round the central cricket and football field while others are dotted about surrounding hills whence the prospect is of cultivated fields although the wild moor is very near. This village has long been associated with hunting and is the home of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds. At all times of the year the horse is in evidence, in the smithy being shod, at exercise or smartly turned out for hunting; as well there are the ponies of mounted shepherds, and the heavily laden horses of long-distance riders (this all applies in some greater or lesser degree to most Exmoor villages). The church has some interesting features, including a 14th-century font, a silver cup dated 1695, choir-stalls given by Queens' College, Cambridge, and a magnificent 15th-century carved oak screen unsurpassed in Exmoor. There is a daily bus to Minehead.

EXMOOR FOREST (760410). A moorland farming area which was a Royal Forest in the Middle Ages. Following the Acts of Enclosure of 1814 ten thousand acres changed from being vast open grazing, without road or shelter, to the great estate owned by the Knight family. It is their landscape of stone-built farms, beech hedges and roads that we see today. Travelling east and west you cross into the Forest on the B3358 at the county boundary two miles to the east of Challacombe, and leave it again at Red Deer Farm, three miles short of Exford. On the north and south route, the northern boundary is the cattle grid at Brendon Two Gates, and the southern at Kinsford Gate. Within this area lie the North and South Forests, separated by the east to west roads. Much of the Forest used to be covered with purple moor grass that carries a blue sheen in summer and in winter wears a coat of yellow. In many places reclamation and improvement have substituted a monotonous green sward but areas of the moor grass still remain, notably on the Deer Forest above Simonsbath.

HAWKCOMBE WOODS (870455) (including Shillet and Homebush Woods). 213 acres of woodland consisting mainly of oak, most of which is coppiced, beech, ash and birch, with occasional sycamore, hazel, elder and rowan. It has been purchased recently by the Exmoor National Park Committee as an amenity area for walkers, riders and naturalists. The woodland walks, some of them waymarked, begin on the outskirts of Porlock and wind upward beside tumbling brooks. Higher, the main valley forks into subsidiary combes, each carrying its charge of moorland water. The woods can best be seen from the top of Porlock Hill, where the Exford road leaves the A39. Here woods are open to the moor and a carpet of whortleberries spreads for some way under the stunted oaks until the overhead cover of taller trees excludes the light and the ground vegetation thins out.

HAWKRIDGE (860307). This village stands high above the right bank of the Barle and is relatively inaccessible. It has a 12th-century church, an adjoining farm or two, and farmsteads scattered over the moors. A lane leads down to Tarr Steps where there are a guest house and a farm providing refreshments.

LUXBOROUGH (974380). A parish south of Dunster consisting of Pooltown ("Kingsbridge"), the bus terminus, with an inn and the original hamlet around the church, a mile up the hill to the west. On the way from Roadwater massed conifers give a "Black Forest" effect contrasting with the open pastures and magnificent trees in the radiating valleys. A good centre for exploring the Brendons.

LYNMOUTH (725495). Once a picturesque little fishing village, at the mouth of the River Lyn, backed by towering wooded cliffs. The theme of yesterday was of thatch and roses, wood smoke, old fishermen and visiting poets. Now many of the buildings are new. There is a wide, deep river channel designed to carry the river spate safely out to sea. Shares with Porlock Weir the distinction of being the only places in the Park where you can drive a car down to the sea wall. There is bathing, boat trips to view the cliffs and bird colonies, and fishing trips can be arranged. Great care is called for in driving on the hills. There is a bus service to Minehead.

LYNTON (720495). With Lynmouth this is one of the main holiday centres in the Park. It is a large and busy Devon village set in the hollow of the hills above the sea. It is saved from exposure to the sea winds by the screen of trees on Summerhouse Hill, and protected from the wet moors by a ring of hills. The hotels, boarding houses, shops and houses are Victorian. There are superb views across the Bristol Channel to Wales, and east and west along the cliffs of Exmoor. The westward coastal path passes below the distorted outlines of the Valley of the Rocks. A frequent bus service to Barnstaple runs along the western border of the Park via Blackmoor Gate and Bratton Fleming. There is a Youth Hostel.

MARTINHOE (667487). This parish is one of the ten whose boundaries lie along the northern coast. West to east they are Combe Martin, Trentishoe, Martinhoe, Lynton, Countisbury, Brendon, Oare, Culbone, Porlock, Selworthy. It is a sparsely populated hamlet with farmsteads and a church and rectory. There are spectacular views of the coast and the Valley of the Rocks. Some moorland farmsteads have long histories: Killington was a Domesday Manor, Croscombe Barton is possibly a Celtic homestead in origin, meaning Cradoc's Combe—Cradoc is a British personal name.

MOLLAND (805283). Lies two miles north of the A361 in the southern margin of the Park. The country around is a mixture of wooded combes and narrow lanes and to northward the foothills of Exmoor rise to a commanding ridge with panoramic views. A number of the large Barton farms around are associated with distinguished Devon families in the 16th and 17th centuries. The church is a 15th-and 16th-century building of outstanding interest. It has a Norman font and medieval bells but the interior is Georgian with box pews and canopied three-decker pulpit. There is an inn, some farms and cottagers cater for visitors.

MONKSILVER (070370). A busy village at the eastern end of the Brendons on the B3188. The landscape is different from the rest of the Park; here is the red earth where a newly ploughed field turns up a bright terracotta. The houses, too, are red sandstone, and some are thatched. Nearby is Combe Sydenham, a 16th-century house to which Sir Francis Drake came to marry the Sydenham heiress. There is a bus service to Taunton on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

NETTLECOMBE COURT (057378). A Tudor house near B3190 and B3188 in the south-east foothills of the Brendons which are rich in small, historic houses. There was a house here from the 12th century, belonging to the Raleigh family. The present building is mostly Tudor and the rooms are richly decorated in plaster work. A recurring design is the head of a horse rising above the waves—the legend is that the first Trevelyan to live here in the 16th century came from the legendary land of Lyonesse and was saved by his swimming horse when Lyonesse sank beneath the sea. Beside the Court is the 15th-century church which contains a remarkable font, dated 1470, depicting the seven sacraments and a remarkable gallery of beautifully carved figures. Church and Court are surrounded by magnificent trees that house a large rookery.

OARE (802472). This well-known hamlet can be approached either down a steep hill off the A 39, or along winding lanes from Brendon. The valley scenery is exceptionally fine, with wooded cleaves, steep screes, narrow bridges and scattered farms. It is estimated that 50,000 visitors come each year. Their main interest is in the 14th/15th-century church which R. D. Blackmore made the setting for the ill-fated wedding of Lorna Doone and Jan Ridd, that arch-brigand of Exmoor, Carver Doone, shooting Lorna through the north window as bride and groom stood at the altar steps. For the first time since records began, the number of residents in this 5,355-acre parish has fallen below one hundred. No regular buses serve the village.

PARRACOMBE (670450). The village is in a valley on the old A39 which has been left in peace now that the busy highway makes a detour. Renowned for the 12th-century church of St. Petroc which stands on a hilltop a mile away—which is only occasionally used in summer and is in urgent need of repair. The village also has a Victorian church of 1878 in its centre. The old church was largely reconstructed in the early 16th century, but a 13th-century chancel and part of the west tower remain. Interior contains unspoilt examples of Georgian box pews, a screen with a wooden tympanum above it, a pulpit and a musicians' gallery. On the walls are the old wooden hat pegs and there are numerous oval plaques bearing texts, such as 'Let all things be done decently and in order'. Walls and ceiling are plastered and whitewashed and everything leans at odd angles. It came perilously near to being demolished in the mid-19th century and was saved by intervention of John Ruskin and art lovers all over England.

PORLOCK (885467). A large coastal village on the A39 6 miles west of Minehead. It has some of the best things in life in pleasing miniature, quiet ways to the sea, old inns, cottage gardens in which flowers bloom before spring snows have left the high crannies on the moor, good shops where it is still the individual customer that counts, and a red stone church with an arresting spire. In the nave is a finely canopied monument displaying the stone effigies of Lord and Lady Harington. He is said to have been a soldier who returned to Porlock after the Battle of Agincourt to recruit men for an ensuing campaign. In 1417 he marched away for the last time with a force of 86 archers (trained in Porlock's Buttyard field) and 28 lancers who were mounted on local horses, and died in France of fever. Porlock—like Lynmouth—attracted poets. Robert Southey stayed at the Ship Inn and wrote a poem:

"Porlock, I shall forget thee not,
Here by the unwelcome summer rain confined . . ."

The church is dedicated to St. Dubricius, first Bishop of Llandaff. Like St. Petroc of Parracombe and St. Beuno of Culbone, and many other churches in the region, it owes its origin to missionary Welshmen who are said to have crossed the Bristol Channel on improvised rafts, some with their sisters and one with a cow.

PORLOCK WEIR. A uniquely small and colourful seaside hamlet on the west side of Porlock Bay. It was once a port, but now only pleasure craft use the miniature harbour. On high tree-covered cliffs, woodland paths lead up to spectacular viewpoints. An hotel, inn, and some private houses provide accommodation, and for day visitors there is a car park with a fine view across the bay to Hurlstone Point.

SELWORTHY (919468). This group of picturesque cottages and an imposing church look out across clement Porlock Vale to the mounting grandeur of the uplands. The combination of thatched cottages, dormer windows, carefully tended flower gardens and trim hedges, with a 'green' and a walnut tree as the centre piece, give the village a picture-postcard appearance. Selworthy is much admired by visitors for these reasons; nonetheless the hamlet fairly expresses the more benign face of Exmoor. The south aisle of the 15th/16th-century church is the finest example of its period in the region. Preservation by the Acland family until 1926 and afterwards by the National Trust has safeguarded the village from unattractive changes. At the bottom of the hill runs the Minehead to Porlock road with a regular bus service.

SIMONSBATH (773392). It is the highest village in the Park (about 1,100 feet) and is situated at the junction of the B3358 and B3223 in the centre of the former Royal Forest. Deer are now rarely seen on the surrounding grass moors. The fine beech wood, protecting the village from the east, was planted by John Knight soon after 1820, and the village centre piece is a 17th-century hunting lodge. For the past seventy years the village and the greater part of the Forest have been in possession of the Fortescue family. Places of interest nearby are Pinkworthy Pond, Bronze Age barrows at Kinsford Gate, Cow Castle three miles down the River Barle, and the heads of the Rivers Exe and Barle near to the Chains. There is an inn (fishing in Barle), and a village post office. The church is one hundred years old and the parish is the largest in the Park.

TARR STEPS (868321). This primitive stone footbridge crosses the River Barle about midway between Dulverton and Withypool. It enables the walker to pass from the high ground flanking the B3223 at Winsford Hill to the Anstey-Molland ridge. A car park, with lavatories, has recently been constructed by the National Park Committee to meet the requirements of the many sightseers and picnickers who visit the site. There are a guest house and a farm providing accommodation nearby.

TREBOROUGH (011364). A small hamlet, lying under the eastern shoulder of Brendon Hill ridge. It comprises a few unpretentious houses, a farm and a simple church. A mile away are the deserted mines which before the First World War supported a hundred miners and their families. Coal had to be brought by railway from Watchet, an ascent of 1,000 feet, but the enterprise was too costly and failed. The workings and abandoned tools of the last miners join those left behind by the Romans.

PLATE XXVI. Barlynch Farm, Dulverton. Mainly 17th-century, it was built on the site and amid the ruins of the late 12th-century Augustinian Priory of St. Nicholas, fragments of which can still be seen

PLATE XXVII. Lower Lynch Farm, Bossington. It stands on the site of the Sydenham family's earlier manor house of Bossington. Their private chapel, built in the early 16th century, adjoins the house and is now a chapel-of-ease to Selworthy

PLATE XXVIII. Lorna Doone Farm, Malmsmead. The packhorse bridge and ford in the heart of R. D. Blackmore's romantic country. The stream is Badgworthy Water

PLATE XXIX. Luccombe Church

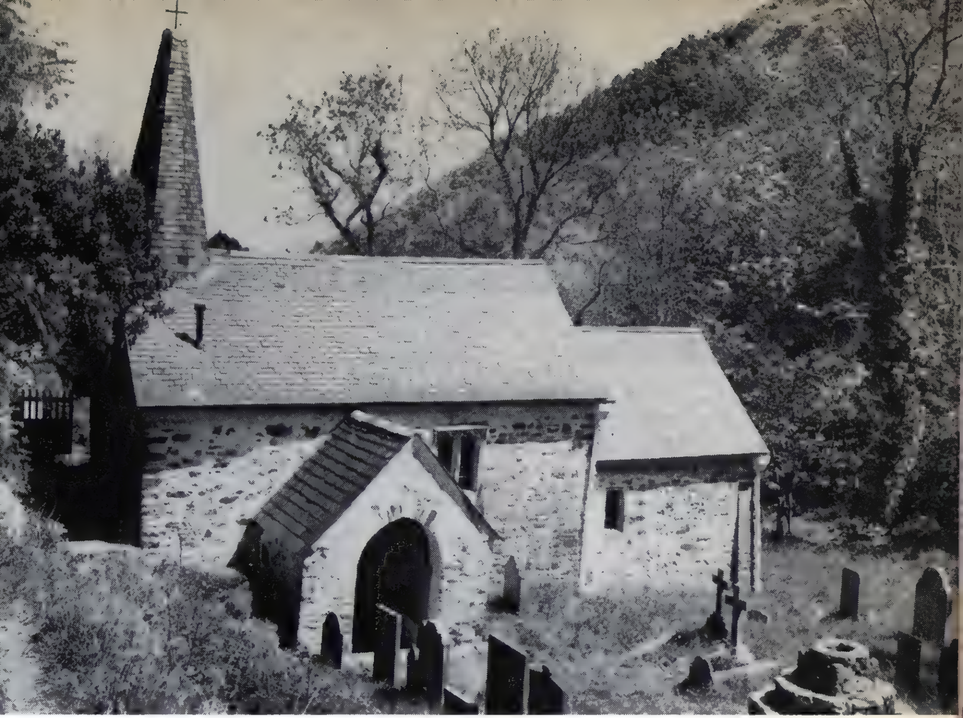
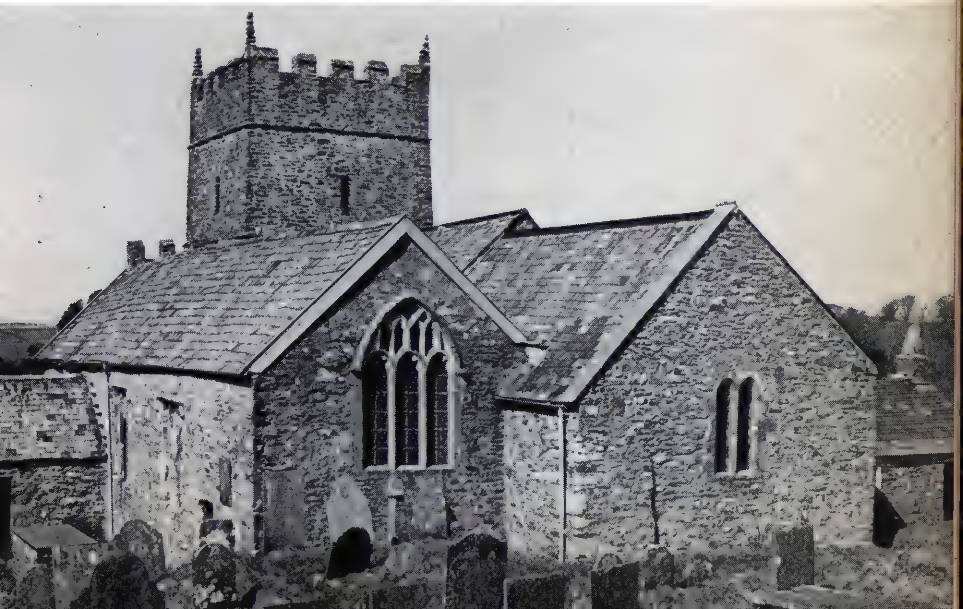


PLATE XXX. Culbone Church. In a setting of trees and wild flowers, one of England's smallest parish churches stands below the coastal road A 39, 5 miles west of Porlock.

PLATE XXXI. St. Petroc's, Parracombe. The charm of this church lies in its furnishing which has remained practically unchanged since the 18th century. There are plain pews in the nave probably of pre-Reformation date, as well as 18th-century box pews; also a wooden tympanum and a musicians' gallery. Preserved largely by the efforts of John Ruskin, St. Petroc's was declared redundant in 1968.



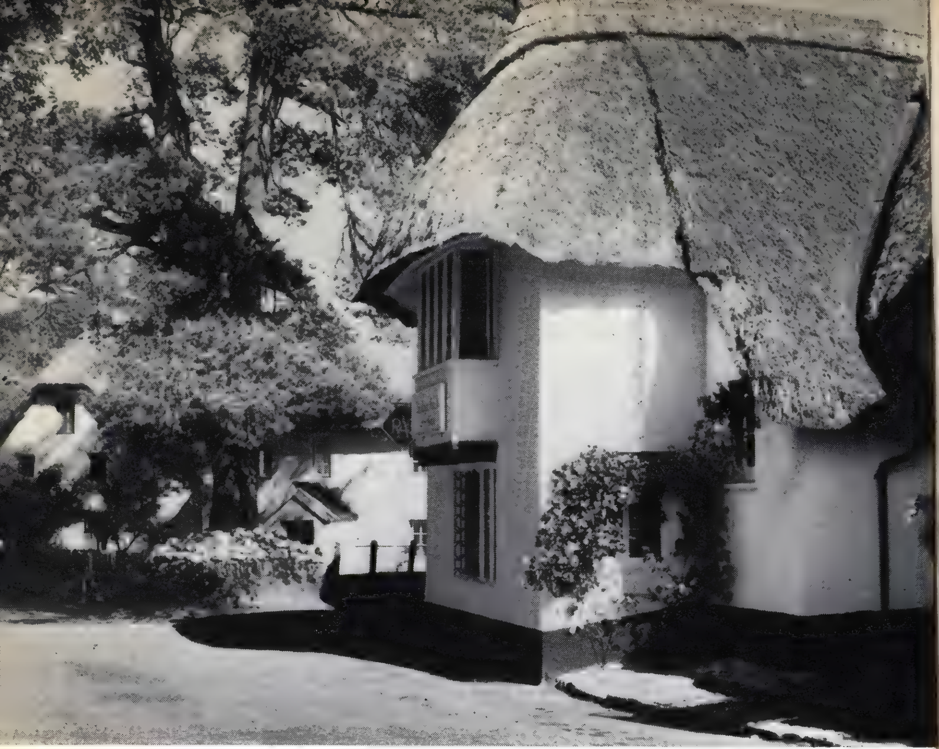


PLATE XXXII. The Royal Oak at Winsford, near the River Barle in the south-east part of the park

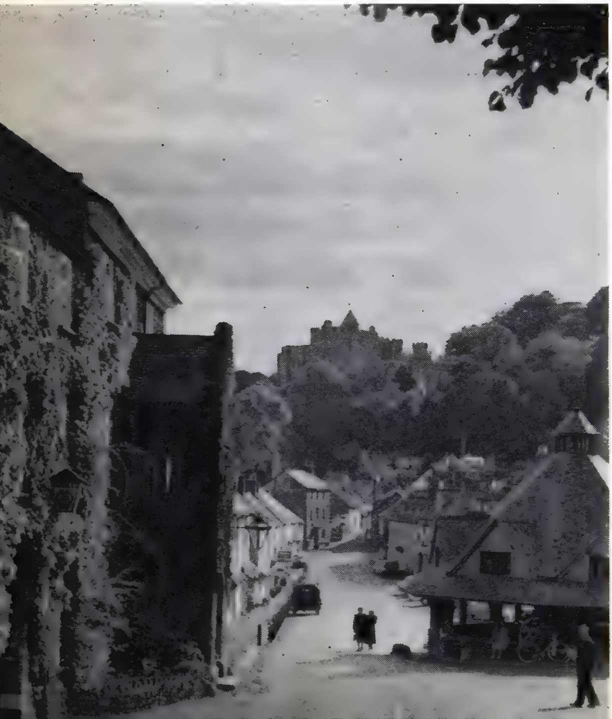


PLATE XXXIII. Dunster's main street. The Yarn Market of 1609 has overhanging eaves, eight gabled windows, and the building is crowned by lantern housing a bell. The Luttrell Arms (left) is a medieval house, once the residence of the Abbot of Cleeve—it is now an hotel. On the crown of the hill stands the even older castle, still the home of the Luttrell family who have continuously occupied it for 500 years

WATERS MEET (745488). The meeting place of the tumultuous East Lyn and the equally fast flowing streams from Farley Water and Hoaroak Water, near the A39. The setting is in a steep-sided cleave, richly wooded and luxuriant with ferns. The bed of the stream is made up of huge boulders at various levels, giving spectacular waterfalls. (National Trust.)

WINSFORD (907349). A picturesque village situated on the River Exe, about five miles below Exford. A fine row of thatched roofs in the village shelters the inn and some cottages. There are several shops, a garage, one of the best village halls in the Park, and it is a good centre for walkers. The church is mainly 15th-century. Winsford Hill (National Trust) is a good place to observe such birds as whinchat, stonechat, buzzard, wheatear; and grouse and deer can sometimes be seen. From the wild life point of view the area is important because of the heather, gorse, bracken and thorn trees which formerly covered large areas in the Park; now this vegetation is rapidly giving place to improved grass lands which are not so rich in natural history. Winsford was the birthplace of Ernest Bevin.

WITHYPOOL (847356). A village situated on the River Barle, between Simonsbath and Dulverton. It has a fine old bridge, one of the four across the Barle (Simonsbath, Landacre—the finest—and Dulverton). It adjoins Withypool Common, one of the two legal commons (the other is Brendon) in the Park. The information about Winsford Hill also applies to Withypool Common. There is an interesting church, an inn, a shop or two, a garage and cottage accommodation.

WOODY BAY (679490). A rocky bay between the Valley of the Rocks and Martinhoe in a magnificently wooded amphitheatre with oak trees rising from the spray zone to the 500-feet contours. An hotel, a manor house and a number of houses are secluded in the woods. There is a lane down to the beach, passable by car, but it is practically impossible to turn at the bottom and visitors are advised to park at the top and walk. Ruins of a jetty are all that remains of a Victorian enterprise to commercialise the Bay. A path leads to Wringapeak where there are seabird colonies—the only place on this coast where guillemots, razorbills and fulmar petrels nest. It is dangerous to try and descend the cliff face.

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APPENDIX I

Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the Park

DEVON

	Monument	*1″ O.S. Sheet Grid Reference*
	BURIAL MOUNDS AND MEGALITHIC MONUMENTS	
205	Challacombe, Chapman Barrows, round barrows	163/694437 –696434
204	Challacombe, Chapman Longstone	163/700432
237	Challacombe, Longstone Barrow, round barrow	163/708426
244	Countisbury, round barrow W. of Kipscombe Hill	163/771491
208	High Bray, round barrow 200 ft. N.W. of Setta Barrow, Bray Common	163/725381
209	High Bray, round barrow 600 ft. S.E. of Setta Barrow, Bray Common	163/726379
95	Kentisbury, round barrow	163/643433
29	Lynton, Lyn Long Stones	163/727475
247	North Molton, two round barrows on North Molton Ridge	163/779325
	CAMPS AND SETTLEMENTS	
51	Brendon, Doone's Houses	163/793444
49	Challacombe, Shoulsbarrow Castle	163/706391
28	Countisbury Castle	163/740494
242	Lynton, Roborough Castle	163/731468
243	Lynton, Stock Castle	163/718468
50	Parracombe, Voley Castle	163/656462
	ROMAN REMAINS	
40	Martinhoe Castle	163/664493
	CASTLE	
104	Parracombe, Holwell Castle	163/670445

SOMERSET

	BURIAL MOUNDS AND MEGALITHIC MONUMENTS	
200	Brompton Regis, Wiveliscombe Barrow, round barrow	164/005348
49	Cutcombe, Dunkery Beacon and adjacent mounds	164/892416
48	Cutcombe, Great Barrow, Little Barrow and adjacent round barrows	164/875414 –876414–877415–878415
50	Cutcombe, Kit Barrows, round barrows	164/901420
47	Cutcombe, round barrow 800 yds. S.W. of Dunkery Beacon	164/889411
199	Elworthy, round barrow 600 yds. S.W. of Tilsey Plantation	164/067343
154	Exford, Alderman's Barrow, round barrow	164/837422
208	Exford, Almsworthy stone circle	164/843417

171	Exford, Bendel's Barrows, round barrows	164/855409 –855411
156	Exmoor, Black Barrow, round barrow	164/833442
157	Exmoor, Chains Barrow, round barrow	163/734419
152	Exmoor, Edgerley Stone	163/720407
161	Exmoor, Rexy Barrow, round barrow, Little Buscombe	163/770419
173	Exmoor, round barrow 500 yds. W.S.W. of Exe Head	163/747414
168	Exmoor, Wood Barrow, round barrow W. of Pinkworthy Pond	163/716425
210	Luccombe, Doverhay Down, round barrow	164/886454
51	Luccombe and Wootton Courtney, Joaney How, Robin How and adjacent mound	164/908428 –909427–908426
158	Oare, two round barrows, Culbone Hill	164/824476 –831474
201	Porlock, stone circle, Porlock Common	164/846446
165	Porlock, Whit Stones, standing stones 270 yds. W. of Whitstone Post	164/854463
148	Winsford, Wam Barrows, group of round barrows, Winsford Hill	164/875343 –877342
97	Withypool, Brightworthy Barrow, round barrow	164/817351
159	Withypool, Old Barrow, round barrow, Old Barrow Down	164/841324
167	Withypool, round barrow, Withypool Hill	164/840344
36	Withypool, stone circle, Withypool Hill	164/837342

CAMPS AND SETTLEMENTS

172†	Dunster, camp on Gallox Hill	164/985426
206	Minehead Without, East Myne Camp	164/937482
205	Selworthy, Bury Castle	164/918471
164	Winsford, Staddon Hill Camp	164/882376

ECCLESIASTICAL BUILDINGS

182	Brompton Regis, Barlinch Priory	164/929290

CROSSES AND INSCRIBED STONES

190*	Dunster, Butter Cross	164/989438
37	Winsford, Caratacus Stone	164/890336

OTHER SECULAR SITES AND BUILDINGS

32*	Dunster, Yarn Market	164/992437
207	Selworthy, Blackford Farm dovecote	164/925453

BRIDGES

11	Brompton Regis, Bury Bridge	164/945275
267	Dulverton, Barle Bridge	164/912278
149*	Dunster, Gallox Bridge	164/990432
30	Luccombe, Horner packhorse bridge	164/898455
29	Luccombe, West Luccombe packhorse bridge	164/899460
35	Oare, Malmsmead Bridge	163/791477
229	Oare Bridge	164/802474
230	Selworthy, Allerford New Bridge	164/900466
212	Selworthy, Allerford packhorse bridge	164/906470

*Crown or Duchy property wholly or partly in the charge of the Minister.

†Crown or Duchy property not in the charge of the Minister.

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197	Winsford, bridge over Winn Brook	164/907349
38	Winsford, packhorse bridge	164/905351
228	Winsford, Vicarage Bridge	164/907351
268	Withypool Bridge	164/846354
266	Withypool, Landacre Bridge	164/817361
34	Withypool, Tarr Steps	164/868321

MISCELLANEOUS

209	Luccombe, The Mound, Stoke Ridge, Stoke Pero	164/881431
211	Luccombe, earthwork on Sweetworthy	164/891426

APPENDIX II

Some Useful Addresses

ANGLING AND BOATING

Ilfracombe and District Anglers Association.
Hon. Sec., John V. Cope, 16 Greenclose Road, Ilfracombe.

Combe Martin Angling Club.
Hon. Sec., B. S. Hill, Homeside, Kentisbury Ford, Barnstaple.

Minehead and District Angling Club.
Hon. Sec., R. G. Tudball, Flat 5, 4 Holloway Street, Minehead.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES; MUSEUMS

The Devon Archaeological Society.
Hon. Sec., E. G. Sandford, c/o Royal Albert Museum, Queen Street, Exeter.

The North Devon Archaeological Society.
Hon. Sec., Mrs. I. Arkle, Heathfield House, Old Torrington Road, Barnstaple.

The Devonshire Association.
Hon. Sec., C. E. Hicks, 7 The Close, Exeter.

The Devonshire Association, North Devon Branch.
Hon. Sec., Mrs. N. G. Whitlock, Stone Cottage, High Bickington, Umberleigh.

The Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.
Sec., C. A. Cookson, O.B.E., The Castle, Taunton.

The Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, West Somerset Branch.
Hon. Sec., J. A. Smither, Uplands, Hopcott Close, Minehead.

The Bridgwater and District Archaeological Society,
Hon. Sec., R. R. J. A. Nesbitt, 50 Ashleigh Avenue, Bridgwater.

Lyn and Exmoor Museum (The Exmoor Society), Lynton.

Barnstaple Museum, St. Anne's Chapel, Barnstaple.

Devon Trust for Nature Conservation.
Hon. Sec., I. D. Mercer, St. Luke's College, Exeter.

Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation.
Hon. Sec., A. C. M. Hingley, Heale Cottage, Curry Rivel, Langport.

CAMPING

Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland.
11 Lower Grosvenor Place, London, S.W.1.

Devon and Cornwall Centre.
Hon. Sec., A. K. Dolton, The Waldrons, Thornhill Way, Mannamead, Plymouth.

Caravan Club of Great Britain and Ireland.
46 Brook Street, London, W.1.

Local Sites

Porlock Caravan Park, Porlock (Tel. Porlock 269).
Caravan Club Caravan Site, Exmoor House, Dulverton (Tel. Dulverton 268).
Glenavon Holiday Park, Combe Martin (Tel. Combe Martin 20631).
Kentisbury Grange Club, Ltd., Kentisbury, Barnstaple (Tel. Combe Martin 3121).

HOLIDAY FELLOWSHIPS LTD.

142 Great North Way, Hendon, London, N.W.4.

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  Area Office, Fanum House, Bedford Street, Exeter (Tel. Exeter 54281).
R.A.C. Headquarters, 83 Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.
  Area Office, Princess House, 1 High Street, Exeter (Tel. Exeter 58333).

NATIONAL PARK

Countryside Commission.
  1 Cambridge Gate, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1.
Exmoor Joint Advisory Committee.
  The Clerk, Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton.
Somerset Park Planning Committee.
  The Clerk, Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton.
Devon Park Planning Committee.
  The Clerk, Devon County Council, County Hall, Exeter.

Wardens

Somerset: J. Collins, Ashwell Farm, Cutcombe, Wheddon Cross (Tel. Timberscombe 254).
Devon: R. Skipworth, Torr Brook, Western Gardens, Combe Martin (Tel. Combe Martin 3035).

NATIONAL TRUST

Headquarters. 42 Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.1.
Exmoor. The Estate Office, Holnicote, Near Minehead (Tel. Porlock 452).

NATURE CONSERVANCY

Headquarters. 19 Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1.
S.W. Region. Roughmoor, Bishops Hull, Taunton.

PONY TREKKING AND RIDING

Exmead Hostel, Exford, Minehead (Tel. Exford 288).
Exmoor and Metropole Riding Stable, 27 Poundfield Road, Minehead (Tel. Minehead 2779).
Ashwick House Farm, Dulverton (Tel. Dulverton 488).
Zeal Farm, Near Dulverton (Tel. Anstey Mills 317).
Knowle House, Timberscombe (Tel. Timberscombe 342).
Exmoor Pony Society, Hon. Sec., Col. V. C. A. Munckton, Capland Orchard, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton.

RAMBLING

Ramblers' Association Headquarters. 124 Finchley Road, London, N.W.3.
The Exmoor Walkers. R. J. Abbot, Oakhayes, South Molton, Devon.
North Devon Ramblers. Hon. Sec., Miss D. Paintin, 40 Moreton Park, Bideford.

YOUTH HOSTELS

Y.H.A. Headquarters. Trevelyan House, 8 St. Stephen's Hill, St. Albans, Herts.
Y.H.A. South-West Regional Office, Belmont House, Stoke, Plymouth.

Hostels
Lyn Bridge, Lynton (Tel. Lynton 3237).
Alcombe Combe, Minehead (Tel. Minehead 2595).
Exmead, Exford, Near Minehead (Tel. Exford 288).

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The Country Code

GUARD AGAINST ALL RISK OF FIRE

Every year costly damage is done by fire to crops, plantations, woodlands and heaths. Picnic fires not properly put out are one cause. A cigarette thrown away or a pipe carelessly knocked out can start a raging inferno. Be careful—a spark may do terrible damage and destroy a lifetime's work.

FASTEN ALL GATES

Animals, if they stray, can do great damage to crops and to themselves too. Tuberculosis-tested cows may mix with others and become infected. Wandering animals are a menace to themselves and to others on country roads. Even if you find a gate open, always shut it after you.

KEEP DOGS UNDER PROPER CONTROL

It is natural for a dog to chase anything that will run. Keep yours out of temptation's way. Animals are easily frightened. The chasing of a ewe or cow may mean the loss of valuable young. Town-bred dogs run great risks from traffic in narrow roads. When near animals or walking along the road, keep your dog on the lead, if he cannot be kept under close control.

KEEP TO THE PATHS ACROSS FARMLAND

Crops are damaged by treading at any stage of growth. Patches of flattened corn in a field make it difficult to harvest. Grass also is a valuable crop, remember. So please walk in single file on field paths. This keeps the track well defined and saves the crop on either side.

AVOID DAMAGING FENCES, HEDGES AND WALLS

If you force your way through a fence or hedge, you will weaken it. Where a man has gone an animal may follow. Stones from walls rolled down slopes may injure people and animals, destroy fences, and damage crops or machines. Use gates and stiles.

LEAVE NO LITTER

All litter is unsightly. Broken glass, tins and plastic bags are dangerous; they very easily maim livestock. Tins, bottles and stones in fields damage costly machinery. This may hold up work which it is vital to finish while the weather holds. So take your picnic remains and other litter home with you.

1 1579

SAFEGUARD WATER SUPPLIES

Water is precious in the country. Never wash dishes or bathe in somebody's water supply or foul it in any other way, or interfere with water-troughs set for cattle.

PROTECT WILD LIFE, WILD PLANTS AND TREES

Wild flowers give more pleasure to more people if left to grow. Plants should never be uprooted. Trees are valuable as well as beautiful: if they are damaged their health and beauty is harmed. Birds and their eggs, animals, plants and trees, should be left alone.

GO CAREFULLY ON COUNTRY ROADS

Country roads have special dangers. Blind corners, hump-backed bridges, slow-moving farm machinery and led or driven animals are all hazards for the motorist. Walk carefully, too. It is generally safer to walk on the right, facing oncoming traffic.

RESPECT THE LIFE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

The life of the country centres on its work. While you are there, try to fit in. The countryman has to leave his belongings in the open; roads and paths run through his place of business, and the public are on trust. His work often involves hard labour. He has to keep early hours. So make as little noise as possible when you pass through his village in the evening. Be considerate, leave things alone, and so repay the local people for the pleasure their countryside has given you.

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